

# SEN INFORMATION REPORT

Sharron Pollitt

DARWEN VALE HIGH SCHOOL ALDRIDGE ACADEMY

**What specialist services and expertise are available at, or accessed by, the school/setting?**

**Faculty Team:**

**SENDCO: Sharron Pollitt**

POD Manager/SENCA: Emma Moore  
HUB Manager/HLTA/Librarian: Rose Addicott

**Level 3 TAs**

Level 3 (SEMH & HI): Helen Holmes  
Level 3 (SPLD, SLCN and Testing): Tracy Warder  
Level 3 (ASD): Zoe Godby  
Level 3 (English): Rachel Charnock

**Level 2 TAs**

Sophia Sidat (Maths specialist)  
Nicola Morini (ASD/Sensory needs specialist)  
Donna Gray (SEMH Specialist)  
Lauren Cheetham (History/SpLD Specialist)

**iClass – Improving Careers, Learning and Social Skills**

iClass is the learning support department at Darwen Vale High School.

iClass stands for: Improving Careers, Learning and Social Skills and the area is open to support all pupils, especially those identified with one or more of the four broad areas of need listed in the SEND Code of Practice 2015. These are: Social, Emotional and Mental Health; Cognition and Learning; Communication and Interaction and Sensory and/or physical needs.

***“We aim to provide an Inclusive environment where all pupils feel valued and able to achieve to their full potential, meeting and exceeding their personal pathways and raising aspirations, regardless of need or disability.***

***We aim to provide staff with the confidence, knowledge and skills to support all pupils to access a full and balanced curriculum.***

***Pupils should feel safe, not only physically and emotionally but also safe to make mistakes and to use these mistakes to make progress.”***

## **iClass HUB**

The Hub is based right in the Heart of the school. This provides a comfortable space with specialists in Specific Learning Difficulties and Speech, Language and Communication Needs, to work on bridging gaps in learning, allowing pupils to fully access their broad curriculum.

## **iClass LINK**

Whilst we value in-class support, we also take our duty to develop pupils into independent young adults very seriously. We look to ICT to support where possible; this could include the use of a reading pen, laptop or voice recognition technology. Where 1:1 support is absolutely necessary, pupils are supported in a non-invasive way, guiding learning so that the full curriculum can be accessed by all pupils. All of the Academy's classrooms are dyslexia-friendly.

## **iClass POD**

Pupils needing a safe space, time out or support with social skills can access the Pod. This is a nurturing space to work and learn together. It's also a place to discuss aspirations, hopes and dreams. Some pupils find a full curriculum too much at times. When this is the case, we are able to offer bespoke timetables and alternative learning environments while pupils access the support they need to enable them to return to mainstream learning.

## **Nurture**

The Pod can be accessed from 8:15am in the morning for breakfast and Nurture. Some pupils need to access us throughout the day, others just need a safe space with friends at break time and lunch time. We offer this space to pupils on a personalised basis.

As well as a wide range of internal provision, the Academy has links with a number of outside agencies including:

- Advisory Teachers for Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, Behavioural, Social and Emotional Needs, Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Speech and Language.
- Educational Psychology Service
- Specialist Providers such as: St Thomas' Centre PRU, Crosshill and Newfield Specialist Schools and The Heights
- Engage
- Youth Offending Team
- Lifeline
- Brook
- The Wish Centre
- Family Wise
- East Lancashire Child and Adolescent Services (ELCAS)
- Health Care Professionals
- Social Care Professionals

This is not an exhaustive list as students will be referred as a need arises.

**What training and experience have the staff supporting children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities had, or are having?**

Sharron Pollitt, the school's SENDCO, has worked at Darwen Vale for over 10 years. She is a strong English teacher who has specialised in SEND since beginning her career. She is a NASEN member and is currently undertaking the National SENCO Award before continuing with her Masters focusing on SEND. Sharron believes in life-long learning and reads constantly so that she is always up-to-date with the most effective methods to support the children in her care.

Alongside the Academy's SENDCO is a team of dedicated and highly trained professionals, all accomplished in their areas.

The Academy's SENCA and Teaching Assistants have chosen to specialise in specific areas of the four main categories of need set out in the SEND Code of Practice 2015. This ensures that their training is targeted and that pupils receive the best possible support.

We have either a level 3 Teaching Assistant or HLTA who leads in each of the main areas of SEND.

Staff are highly trained and accomplished in ASD and sensory needs strategies, Speech, Language and Communication Needs, Specific Learning difficulties.

Alongside the Academy's PATH Centre, we are building even more focused provisions for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties.

Two members of staff are also now trained by SEND Support Service to work with pupils with HI.

Classroom teachers receive regular professional development training so that they are fully skilled to work with the needs of the pupils in the school.

Teaching Assistants attend the same training as the Academy's teaching staff to ensure that we work as a team around your child.

## **How do you know if my child/young person needs extra help?**

When pupils transition in year 7, we test using CATS (Cognitive Ability Tests), Reading and Spelling Assessments. These are analysed and personalised and appropriate interventions are initiated where required.

Pre-tests are carried out to identify pupils for specific interventions. These could include screeners, 1:1 or group tests. Specific needs and gaps in learning are identified and discussed with teachers and parents before a personalised 6-week program is built and delivered. These are usually in 20 – 45 minute slots so that pupils do not spend too much time out of the classroom.

Post-tests are carried out to check progress and next steps are planned for.

If it is felt that a pupil would benefit from additional support, this is discussed with pupils, parents and teachers.

We may decide to refer to an external professional for additional support and advice.

## **What should I do if I think my child/young person may have special educational needs?**

As parents, your input is incredibly valuable for the effective support of your child.

If you have concerns, you should contact the school SENDCO, Sharron Pollitt. She will listen to your concerns and advise you of the next steps. This may include some testing in school or a referral to an appropriate professional. Either way, you will be fully involved at all stages of the process.

If you require further advice or support, you can contact SENDIASS and speak to Jane Partington. She has close links to Darwen Vale and can attend any meetings with you for support.

## **How will staff support my child/young person?**

### **What Provision can we offer?**

- Break/Lunchtime nurture groups
- In-class support where required
- Breakfast or homework clubs
- 1:1 or Group withdrawal for intervention
- An Alternative Curriculum Pathway or Personalised timetable
- Recovery Time card to access the POD or the DEN sensory room
- Toilet or Medical Pass
- Access to counselling or a designated Mentor
- Access to outside agency support such as an Educational Psychologist, East Lancashire Child and Adolescent Services or the SEND Support Service

The National Curriculum sets out three key principles for inclusion, to be considered at all levels of curriculum planning:

- setting suitable learning challenges
- responding to students' diverse learning needs
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students

At the Academy we aim to provide a graduated response that includes a range of strategies along the continuum of SEND.

In the classroom, teachers provide programs of work that are matched to each student's ability. If, despite these inclusive strategies, the student is experiencing significantly greater difficulty in accessing the National Curriculum than their peers, increased levels of support will be provided.

The stages of the graduated response are as follows:

#### Level 1

1. The student's name is added to the SEN Register.
2. Parents or carers are informed.
3. Students have an Individual Learning Plan written for them.
4. Previous strategies are reviewed.
5. A programme of support is agreed; this could include any of the following:
  - Literacy/Numeracy support
  - Revised classroom strategies
  - Alternative curriculum
  - Additional resources
  - Mentoring or counselling

*The student's progress is reviewed continually.*

If, at the review, the student appears to continue to have significantly greater difficulty in accessing the curriculum than their peers, then increased levels of support will be provided at Level 2

Level 2

1. More specialist assessment is provided, sometimes by the Educational Psychologist.
2. External support services may advise staff.
3. A further programme of action is agreed for the student. This could include any of the following:
  - Increased literacy/numeracy support
  - Support from a specialist support teacher or assistant
  - Alternative curricular arrangements (e.g. Foundation groups/PLC)
  - Access to additional resources
  - Further classroom management strategies

*The student's progress continues to be reviewed.*

For a very few students help at Level 2 may not be sufficient to enable progress to be made. It will then be necessary for the Academy, in consultation with parents and/or outside agencies, to ask the LEA to initiate statutory assessment procedures towards an Education, Health and Care Plan.

### **Students with IPRA's (until they are phased out)**

The Academy receives funding from the LEA for students with IPRA's. This funding has traditionally been used to provide in-class support from a Support Assistant for the student; however, changes to the funding arrangements mean that this can be more flexible e.g. buying specialist equipment or offering a personalised curriculum.

Students who have an IPRA will have an Individual Learning Plan which outlines key information and the intervention that is in place. This is a planning document, highlighting the students' learning and/or behavioural needs and suggesting the possible provision to overcome these needs.

Copies of the ILP are sent to all of the child's teachers via Class Charts and parents/carers and pupils are asked to comment on these. The ILP is reviewed termly. All ILPS are written and updated by the SENDCO and her specialist team.

### **Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)**

An EHCP outlines a student's needs in terms of Education, Health and Social Care.

*How will the curriculum be matched to my child's/young person's needs?*

Students in the Academy follow the National Curriculum. The Academy's 'core business' is teaching and learning and we ensure that this is of the highest standard.

Some of the main differences noticed by the students are in how the curriculum is structured, the regular assessment and emphasis on themes of entrepreneurship. The Academy curriculum provides entrepreneurship both as a discrete subject and as a theme underpinning every area of the curriculum.

Students who struggle to access mainstream curriculum pathways are supported in a number of different ways.

1. The first stage of differentiation is quality first teaching as described in the SEND Code of Practice 2015. All staff are provided with information and guidance on teaching and supporting each individual child and their differing needs via Class Charts. If a child is still struggling to make progress, iClass will provide training or additional resources for members of staff.
2. Stage two involves specific targeted intervention and support for individual students and/or groups of students. This may involve the use of specialist equipment, in class support or withdrawal intervention.
3. Stage 3 may involve an alternative curriculum such as Nurture Groups in Key Stage 3 or by accessing the Pod or Link units with Pop-up interventions. Any changes to a student's curriculum will be discussed in full with the students and their parents/carers.

Further advice is sought where appropriate from outside agencies to ensure that the curriculum is appropriately adapted to meet the students' needs.

How will the curriculum be matched to my child's/young person's needs?

Pupils are placed in groups which reflect their ability, confidence and nurture requirements.

Each pupil is an individual and wherever possible, we will personalise timetables accordingly.

Staff will differentiate and, importantly, extend learning as appropriate.

Homework will further extend learning.

We value reading highly at Darwen Vale and work hard to ensure that any texts used are accessible to all pupils. Alongside this, we monitor reading development closely and encourage children to develop a love of reading and learning.

At the end of Year 9, pupils will be able to choose from a variety of option subjects to study for their GCSEs.

How will teaching approaches be modified to support my child/young person?

All teaching staff receive advice and guidance both on general strategies to support a child's learning (e.g. dyslexia friendly classroom) and specific strategies for individual students.



Quality first teaching ensures that classroom practice reflects the needs of the children.

This is monitored regularly via observation, work scrutiny, learning walks and pupil tracking.

Teaching Assistants work closely with teaching staff to plan and adapt learning activities for the needs of the different students.

How will both you and I know how my child/young person is doing?

The Academy's whole school approach involves termly progress updates and an annual written report.

Parents are also invited in for formal parent's evenings and informal discussions throughout the Academy year.

Additionally, the iClass faculty reviews progress termly through the use of provision mapping and ILPS.

Parents are invited in as part of the review process to discuss progress and set future targets.

For some students, more regular, informal updates have been the key to successful communication. This can be done by telephone or email.

Students with IPRA's or Education, Health and Care Plans will have a statutory annual review led by the school where all stakeholders

### **How will you help me to support my child/young person's learning?**

We are here for you as well as your child.

We can signpost you, through the Academy's PATH Centre and the SEND Team to a number of professionals who can help you in supporting your child's learning and well-being.

We are always just a phone call away.

We are also delighted to introduce a new classroom tool at Darwen Vale called Class Charts. It is an online system which teachers use to not only track achievement and behaviour throughout the school day but also homework and detentions.

We firmly believe in working closely with parents/carers and one of the key benefits of using 'Class Charts' is that we are able to securely share your child(s)' achievement and behaviour with you, keeping you up-to-date in real-time.

Students are also able to see their own progress and reflect on their achievement and behaviour.

Each student will be provided with a unique access code to the system and full details of how to log in will be provided.

**We strongly recommend that all parents log in frequently to monitor behaviour and progress.**

Once you have created an account and are logged in, if you have more than one child in the Academy, you can enter additional codes.

More information for parents can be found on the guide that that is attached to this page.

Links to mobile phone apps are also available to parents from this page  
[www.classcharts.com/parent/login](http://www.classcharts.com/parent/login)

**What support will there be for my child's/young person's overall wellbeing?**

Alongside nurture, before and during the school day, and the after school clubs, we have a sensory room and POD Centre.

These are specifically designed to support young people with sensory and social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

**We also have the PATH Centre - Pupil Advice That Helps (named by our pupils).**

PATH is seen as a beacon of good practice in Blackburn with Darwen and beyond.

The PATH Manager co-ordinates links with professionals such as:

- our School Counsellors
- Family Wise
- Child Action North West
- Youth Zone
- ASU
- ELCAS
- school nurses
- social care teams
- and many other support agencies

The PATH Manager, Katrina Leigh, and her team of school counsellors are also on hand daily for pupil drop-in at break times and lunch times. They can offer a listening service or signpost pupils to the correct person or service to meet their needs.

What activities will be available for my child/young person?

We fully expect that pupils with SEND at Darwen Vale are able to and encouraged to access the same extra-curricular activities as those without additional needs.

We have an accomplished Faculty of Arts who run a range of extra-curricular clubs. At present these include:

- Dance – the Academy's shows are well-known in the community
- Drama
- Sports including football, rugby, table-tennis, trampolining, netball etc.

We also offer:

- Language clubs
- Homework support with our HLTA in the library after school where pupils can access computers and printing facilities

In addition, some pupils with SEND are invited to join our Nurture groups at break and lunch times where they can access computers, board games and a safe space with support.

### **How will you prepare and support my child/young person during transitions?**

The SENDCO will attend Year 6 Reviews at primary schools for pupils who are highlighted as needing additional support. This is an opportunity for pupils and parents to meet with her to discuss what support may be required.

Our HLTA leads on a transition programme called MOTHS - "Moving on to high school".

- During these sessions, she and other members of our support staff will visit with and work with small groups of pupils in their primary school during the final term.
- If they, parents or primary staff feel that additional visits would be beneficial, we devise a personalised programme to accommodate these.
- This can be as often as the individual child needs to become comfortable in the setting.
- Ideally, these visits begin before three designated Transition Induction Days so that the pupil feels completely at ease and is able to access all that is on offer.

The MOTHS programme allows pupils to begin to know some names and faces at high school. We then ensure that these staff are on hand during Induction days and for as long as necessary from the September term. MOTHS continues for the first six weeks in September for a fully wrap around transition process.

For those pupils who are still struggling in September, we can offer Nurture on a full-time, part-time or pop-up basis.

How are resources and equipment allocated and matched to my child's/young person's needs?

At the Academy we adopt a graduated response to students' needs. Any additional resources (including support staff) are allocated on a needs basis with full discussion with parents/carers and the student. The Academy receives funding from the Department of Education to provide support for students with additional needs.

For high needs students, individual top-up funding is provided from the Local Authority. This is to ensure that their specific needs are met. Annual reviews give opportunities for parents/carers and students to discuss how resources are utilised and identify any further funding needs.

The Academy accesses global services from a number of providers including education, health and social care. The referral to these services are discussed with parents/carers and students. In addition, the Academy buys in services from a number of providers linked to the needs of the students.

How are decisions made about what type and how much support my child/young person will receive?

These decisions are made on an individual need basis.

Parents and carers are involved at all stages of this decision making process.

We will ensure that pupils' needs are met in a way that allows them to retain and build independence for later life.