



Welcome to The Dales School

The town of Blyth, in which the school is located, is a post-industrial town which continues to experience economic and social decline. Although the majority of our children are from homes in south-east Northumberland, we also have children who travel from other parts of the county, requiring longer travel times. The vast majority of children are transported to school by the local authority.

The Council and partners are working to improve preventative approaches and access to early help through increasing the number of early help assessments, team around the family and early help plans. To support this 'Local Early Help Hubs' have been piloted and developed in the Blyth Valley at the initiation of The Dales School. These are now to be 'rolled out' across all 4 regions of Northumberland.

Keeping Children and Young People Safe from Harm, Abuse and Neglect

The Dales School was last inspected in October 2013 when it was identified as 'Outstanding'.

The Dales School caters for children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) / Statements of Special Educational Need, identified as those with needs related to Autistic Spectrum Condition; Social Emotional and Mental Health needs, and Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties in the age range of 2–11 years old.

In recent years, there has been a gradual change in the degree and complexity of needs with which children present on admission. This includes those with a morbidity of conditions / needs and those who are disadvantaged by socio-neurological conditions such as foetal alcohol syndrome. The significant increase in children on roll who present with pronounced delayed development and limited potential in relation to independence has resulted in a review of provision for this key area. As a result, we focus much of our work through a life-skills, sensory and creative curriculum.

Assessment on entry includes: Academic; Behavioural, and other (including medical / social). The process of 'induction' into school, follows a set programme of assessment and review involving the child, parents / carers, staff and reports.

Children in the EYFS enter school at a level well below children of a similar age. Their communication, language and literacy and personal, social emotional development are mainly at emerging stages. As a result of the schools' strong focus on communication and personal development, the children have made good progress in these areas by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Other pupils, prior to joining the school, have experienced significant disruption in their education and the majority have been identified with additional learning needs. This has had a significant impact on the development of their knowledge and skills, which on entry to school are well below those

expected for their age. On entry to the school a significant number, particularly those who are in the care of the local authority also lack the social and emotional skills they need to better access learning.

Teaching staff are highly skilled in making and maintaining positive relationships and as a result, pupils learn well and are supported well in developing emotionally and socially.

The school has good data and uses PIVATs and EYFS data to track progress.

In lessons, pupils communicate enthusiastically about their work; a sign of how much they enjoy their learning. In addition the interdependence of assessment and target setting have a positive impact on the degree and pace of progress which children are motivated to make.

Pupils achieve well across the curriculum because the highly effective interventions are personalised and have a positive impact on pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and on their confidence in their learning.

Achievement overall is outstanding for pupils who are established (2 years plus on role) in school.

There are 10 teaching groups accommodating a maximum of 10 children in any one group. Children are grouped in consideration to age and stage in an effort to offer the best possible opportunity to engage with learning.

In addition, children are supported by specialist trained staff in: Speech, language, communication, Massage, Physiotherapy, Rebound Therapy, Play Therapy, Rebound Therapy, and Art Therapy.

A group of experienced non-teaching staff and one part-time teacher make up our 'Intervention Team'.

Further support is provided by a Family Support Coordinator and a Family Learning Coordinator

Working with families at The Dales School

At The Dales School, we understand the importance of working with Families and the impact this can have on the education of our children. All staff in school work very hard to build relationships with our Parents/ Carers. This is ongoing and we offer an 'Open Door Policy'. We do, however, offer Intensive Support to Parents/Carers and this is delivered by the Family Support Co-ordinator and the Family Learning Co-ordinator.

Family Support

The Dales supports the families of children:-

- By being a contact in school to offer advice/ information, and help parents / carers access other agencies / services who may be able to help.
- By supporting parents / carers on visits to other agencies or schools.
- By providing workshops, training and events, to empower parents and give them a greater understanding of their child's needs.
- Being available for 1:1 sessions to support with any issues that parents have.
- Helping parents / carers build relationships with other parents and carers of children with similar needs.

Parents and carers are acutely aware that, working together we can make a difference and, are committed to supporting The Dales in provision of high quality and effective learning opportunities for their children.

Family Learning

Families will be involved with their child's education and learning in school and offer advice and support for each other. These sessions allow parents to develop a relationship with school and staff. Children are happy when their parents are joining in at school. Parents can build their own confidence and skills and create new relationships with other parents. They are reassured their children are receiving a good education. Work and skills can be created to be implemented at home.

The use of the Pupil Premium to promote achievement:

The Intervention Team

The Dales School caters for children (age 2 -11) with a range of special educational needs, or as we prefer to view their need – children who have individual educational challenges. In addition to teaching and support staff the school employs range of specialist assistants, including: a Speech and Language assistant; a Physiotherapy Assistant; a Family Learning coordinator; a Family Support Worker; Emotional Literacy Support Assistants, and; an Intervention coordinator. Pupils attend from across the county of Northumberland and some have experienced significant disruption in their education prior to joining The Dales. Most pupils are White British and a high proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. One pupil speaks English as an additional language.

Many of the children who attend the school reflect the complex and changing areas of focus in SEND provision including pupils with ASC and FAS. The school manages a number apprentice Teaching Assistants. We have the ambition of building skills and capacity in the local community and a 'grow our own' approach to finding staff sympathetic to the ethos and philosophy of the school, which is strongly committed to therapeutic interventions.

Intervention

The term 'intervention' often has an association with behaviour in SEND settings. At the Dales it is associated with therapeutic approaches to emotional issues experienced by children.

Intervention starts for pupils at the Dales School before they are admitted. Children are visited in their present setting, parents are invited to school to help plan provision, and the pupil is invited to school. After the first month in school, during which time a full induction package is delivered and recorded, a baseline assessment is carried out, followed by a whole staff 'clinic' where the school's plans and potential interventions for the child are discussed. This is an opportunity to discover whether prior assessments have accurately described the pupil.

The assessment procedure for new entrants to The Dales has three key areas of focus: *Behavioural*, *Speech and Language* and, *Academic*. For most pupils, the key to making academic progress will depend very much on overcoming barriers to learning that are associated with behaviour, speech and language.

Costs

The full staffing cost of the intervention team is greater than the pupil premium which follows the Looked After Children and those who register as eligible for Free School Meals.

In terms of being able to demonstrate that the pupil premium is being used to tackle disadvantage, and promote opportunities for pupils to progress and achieve academic milestones they would not have otherwise reached, the intervention team achieves its aim, and offers benefits that are wide ranging and accessed by the entire school population.

At the end of their time at The Dales the staff prepare and support the child and family in the transition. This includes, where appropriate: Supported pre-visits, meetings with receptor schools (of

staff, children and families), transfer of current information and data, transfer of support services (e.g. Social Services, CHYPS, etc).

The Dales Teaching School Alliance

The Dales School was designated a Lead Teaching School in October 2014. We are also a National Support School and, the Head Teacher is a National Leader in Education. A consultant is commissioned to coordinate the activities of The Teaching School Alliance. Within our partners are both maintained and academy schools covering the age range from 2 – 19.

The Dales and 3 other Lead Teaching Schools (all of whom are Specialist schools) have come together into one cohesive group, working together to the benefit of all the schools within their alliances and other Specialist provision in the region and nationally.

As a National Support School, and previously before designation, staff from The Dales School have worked to offer support and guidance to other schools and colleagues in matters of Specialist provision. As a result we have worked with schools from other regions of the U.K. and throughout Europe. The latter through British Council Comenius projects over the last 8 years.

In another initiative, The Dales staff have, for the last 3 years, conducted an annual 'Good Practice Day' for local SCITT students.

Facilities

The Dales School is accommodated in what was previously a Middle School, built in the 1930s.

Since September 2010 there has been a rolling programme of improvement to facilities and accommodation. As a result we now have:-

- A school garden with associated 'potting shed' and wildlife hide / classroom.
- A sensory room.
- Refurbished the gymnasium.
- Developed the school hall to create performance / conference area.
- 3 x external teaching areas with direct access from the adjacent classrooms.
- Developed 2 classrooms with facility to convert to one with opening, sound-proofed, doors.
- Developed 'The Garden House'. A 3 bedroomed house which can 'sleep' 8 children and 2 staff, renovated and extended to include a conservatory with access to the garden.
- A soft-play room.
- A play park.
- An outdoor Active Zone
- Improved parking facilities.
- Improved access security.
- ICT throughout the school, including wireless systems.
- A central quad area with soft surface and shelter.
- Development of the school office to accommodate increased staff.
- Provision of 2 x minibuses and a 'people-carrier' vehicle.