

## **Blackburn with Darwen Council's Local Offer for Children & Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – Pleckgate High School**

### **Who we are**

Pleckgate High School is an 11-16 comprehensive school with the capacity for 1350 pupils; there are currently 1250 pupils on roll, approximately 100 of whom are on the special educational needs register. In September 2011 the school relocated to a new, purpose built, state of the art building and on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016 Pleckgate converted to academy status. In addition to striving for academic excellence and giving all pupils the opportunity and encouragement to fulfil their potential, pastoral care and emotional support are an important focus. Pupils have continuity of pastoral support during their time here, having the same tutor and head of year throughout their five years at the school; this promotes productive working relationships, where expectations are clearly understood.

All pupils at Pleckgate are equally valued and, as such, much is in place to ensure accessibility of curriculum for all, whatever the nature of their special educational need or level of ability. In January 2019, OFSTED judged Pleckgate to be an outstanding provider of education in all areas.

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

- Educational Psychology
- School Nurse
- Inclusion Support Service (advisory teachers)
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Physiotherapists
- ELCAS (adolescent mental health service)
- Paediatricians

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

All TAs have received extensive training, delivered mainly by professionals from outside school. This has included:

- Visual impairment – advisory teacher for VI

- Hearing impairment – advisory teacher for HI
- Speech and Language – senior speech and language therapist
- Behaviour management – advisory teacher for SEBD; SENCO
- Safer people handling – advisory teacher for physical needs; occupational therapist
- Promoting better literacy – advisory teacher for SPLD
- Autism – advisory teacher for autism; SENCO
- Working memory – senior educational psychologist; follow-up training delivered by SENCO
- Maximising the impact of TA support – SENCO
- Promoting English with EAL pupils – SENCO

In addition, all staff delivering intervention programmes have received extensive training on Literacy Catch-up, Numeracy Catch-up, Dyslexia Support, Speech and Language and EAL learners.

### **Accessibility**

Pupils are provided with appropriate aids and adaptations are made as necessary to enable them to access the curriculum without disadvantage, thus having equality of opportunity to reach their potential. For example, most pupils are issued with an iPad-mini, but visually impaired pupils are issued with a full-size iPad or a MacBook; where necessary, pupils have use of a laptop with specialist software. Resources are enlarged prior to lessons by designated teaching assistants.

The medical room has been adapted with a hoist and sling to enable the safe toileting and changing of wheelchair bound pupils.

Two lifts ensure that all areas of the building are accessible to all pupils.

Advice issued by speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists is distributed to the relevant staff to ensure recommendations and strategies can be incorporated into lesson planning.

Pupils with dyslexia are given coloured exercise books and/or overlays and reading rulers for use in lessons and with homework.

Writing slopes and pen grips are available for pupils whose dyspraxia and/or poor motor skills makes it difficult to write neatly on a flat surface.

### **Who to contact**

Name: Janet Knowles (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator – SENCO)

Phone: 01254 244315

Email: [jknowles@pleckgate.com](mailto:jknowles@pleckgate.com)

Website: <http://www.pleckgate.com/>

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

Extensive liaison with the primary school.

Information and advice from other professionals involved, e.g. speech and language service, occupational therapists, paediatricians.

Discussion with parents/carers, including visits to the school during the working day to look at provision and discuss priorities of need and expectations of outcomes.

Expressions of concern from teachers.

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

Speak to the school in the first instance and the SENCO, Janet Knowles, should be able to advise you on appropriate next steps. These may involve assessments being carried out within the school or a referral being made to the appropriate service. Such referrals may be done by the school or, dependent upon the nature of the concern, by the GP.

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

The Learning Support Department comprises a team of eighteen staff who work in a variety of roles to promote the learning and wellbeing of all pupils. The nature of the support provided is determined by the needs of the individual pupil.

Many teaching assistants work within whole class lessons, with the aim of removing the barriers to learning that pupils with SEN can experience. This involves the differentiation and adaptation of resources, as well as ensuring, through additional explanation, that the pupil is fully aware of the desired learning outcome of the lesson, i.e. what the lesson objective is and what is expected of them. Pupils completing work as independently as possible is an absolute priority at Pleckgate. Teaching assistants will never complete the work for a pupil; this would be detrimental to their progress, impacting negatively on the acquisition and development of their independence skills.

Not all pupils with SEND have access to additional in-class support. It may be that they attend interventions, usually taught 1:1 for 2 half-hour sessions per week. These include Literacy Catch-up, Numeracy Catch-up, Speech and Language, Dyslexia

Support and Motor Skills Practice. The purpose of these sessions is to give pupils the basic skills to enable them to access the whole curriculum effectively throughout the wider school. The Literacy and Numeracy Catch-up provisions are currently managed by the English and mathematics departments, enabling these sessions to be more closely linked to the curriculum.

Pupils entering the school in Year 7, who are working at levels significantly below age related expectations, are identified prior to starting at Pleckgate and teachers are made fully aware of their difficulties in accessing the mainstream curriculum. This enables effective strategies to be planned and implemented. The curriculum is differentiated to an appropriate level and the focus is on improving basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Pupils with high and complex needs follow personalised curriculums and are taught within Learning Support for most lessons; they attend science, technology and drama lessons in the wider school. Their individual timetables might include sessions for speech and language, physiotherapy and gross and fine motor skills. Some pupils receive fulltime care, including at breaks and lunchtimes, some are assisted with toileting and eating and some require adult supervision at all times. The pupils' safety and welfare is our number one priority; we strive to ensure that pupils are happy and secure in their environment, as only then can they learn and fulfil their potential.

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

In addition to extensive liaison with the primary school and with parents/carers, all pupils are assessed on entry to Pleckgate and this informs setting; at Key Stage 3, pupils are taught across 10 sets for all subjects. This enables pupils of similar ability to be taught together, with the curriculum tailored to their ability levels and a relatively small range of ability within each set. Pupils functioning at the lowest levels are taught an alternative, personalised curriculum, much like those delivered in special schools. From September 2020, this group consists of seventeen pupils in years 7 to 11, taught between two smaller classes, dependent upon ability. These pupils are studying towards ASDAN Short Course qualifications in English, maths, science, history, geography and RE. They are regularly assessed in literacy and numeracy with a focus on life skills and promoting independence in preparation for adulthood.

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

Across the whole school, work is planned and delivered at a level appropriate to the abilities of the pupils within classes. For pupils with specific needs, for example, dyslexia, visual impairment or hearing impairment, teachers follow strategies recommended by advisory teachers and the SENCO. Pupils are issued with resources to remove barriers to learning and ensure that they are able to access the curriculum as fully as possible.

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

Half-termly assessment and monitoring takes place for every pupil across all subject areas and this is reported to parents/carers in the form of a mark sheet. These include effort grades and an indication of progress towards end of year target levels. Full

written reports are issued annually and parents' evenings take place annually too. In addition to the full parents' evening, usually held in April, year 7 pupils have a 'settling in' evening with form tutors and their head of year. This is usually held in November and is a valuable opportunity for any concerns to be shared, as well as for praise to be given. Year 11 pupils have an additional 'Raising Achievement' parents' evening in the Autumn term. This is an opportunity to discuss current levels of attainment in relation to target grades, teachers' expectations of pupils and how parents/carers can assist in ensuring that their child reaches their potential.

Pupils who attend literacy and numeracy interventions are assessed three times over the year, enabling adjustments to be made to provision as appropriate.

Of course, parents/carers are always welcome to contact the school should they have concerns and, likewise, the school will contact home, should it be deemed necessary.

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

Pleckgate has several initiatives in place to help you assist with your child's education. These include:

Accelerated Reader – you can encourage your child to read and take time to discuss with them what they are reading.

Google Classroom – A remote teaching tool on which pupils can access and complete work, then return it to the teacher

You are encouraged to ensure that pupils have a suitable, quiet environment in which to complete their homework.

Speaking and listening is an important focus of the school and you are encouraged to have conversations with your children as often as possible. Speaking in English is important too, as is having television and radio programmes on in English.

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

Pleckgate has a strong pastoral network. Pupils have the same head of year and tutor for their five years at the school, so they get to know these people very well. In addition, there are two safe-guarding officers who work with vulnerable pupils, sometimes long-term, sometimes short-term, providing a safe environment where the aim is develop a relationship of mutual trust with someone who is not a teacher. We also have an ELSA (emotional literacy support) trained teaching assistant, who works 1:1 with pupils identified as requiring additional emotional support. Should there be serious concern about a pupil's mental health, a referral may be made, with parental consent, to the educational psychologist or to ELCAS (the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service).

Pleckgate treats all allegations of bullying seriously and all are fully investigated. Pupils are encouraged to let someone know immediately if they feel bullied. The school is proud of the fact that in the most recent survey, 100% of parents felt that 'the school deals effectively with issues of bullying'.

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

Educational visits and activities, including trips abroad, mostly linked to the curriculum, are offered to all pupils and take place throughout the school year.

Pupils looked after at lunchtimes have activities arranged, both indoors and outside (weather permitting), and all are encouraged to join in.

A small group of pupils studies life skills, taking part in sessions which include baking, shopping, washing up and putting bedding on. These are valuable learning experiences which the pupils both enjoy and benefit from.

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

In the summer term, the SENCO visits all feeder primary schools and meets with key staff there. This enables information to be shared and appropriate provision to be put in place prior to the September transfer. In addition, vulnerable pupils are invited to pre-induction day visits. This gives them the opportunity to meet their prospective form tutor and head of year, as well as to familiarise themselves with the school building, in particular the Learning Support area; some of the more vulnerable pupils have several pre-induction day visits. Where appropriate, Pleckgate's TAs spend time in the pupils' primary schools, learning how best to support them and meet their needs, thus facilitating a smooth transition. Parents/carers are encouraged to visit Pleckgate too, to discuss their concerns and make clear their expectations for their child.

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

Advice is sought from the relevant professionals, e.g. occupational therapists, to ensure that appropriate resources and equipment are in place prior to a child starting at Pleckgate.

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

Communication and the gathering of information is key, so, in addition to transition meetings in the summer term, the SENCO attends all year 6 statutory review meetings for pupils who have stated Pleckgate as their preferred high school; many year 5 review meetings are attended too.

Provision in place at the primary school will not necessarily continue in the same form following transition. This is due to both the changing needs of pupils and the nature of a large secondary school environment. For example, great importance is placed on pupils working independently, in preparation for independent living in adulthood, so only a handful of pupils at Pleckgate have a teaching assistant on a 1:1 basis fulltime. The role of the teaching assistant is to contribute to pupils' wellbeing, to remove barriers to learning and to ensure the lessons are accessible to all, with the pupils themselves completing tasks to the best of their ability. This ensures that the integrity of what the pupil is able to achieve is maintained, enabling teachers to build an accurate picture of where the pupil is at in terms of their learning, and so plan future provision appropriately.

Regular and lengthy discussions take place with all those involved with the pupil, to ensure the best possible package of support is in place to promote achievement.