

Examples of School Inclusion for Pupils with Down's Syndrome

Secondary School



A Down's Syndrome Association Publication

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CT = class teacher; TA = Teaching Assistant; CC = Community College

CELEBRATING SUCCESS:

Examples of School Inclusion for Pupils with Down's Syndrome in Secondary School

Introduction

The Celebrating Success series of booklets give examples of the experiences of pupils with Down's syndrome in real school settings. Using the words of the students, teachers, the teaching assistants and parents they demonstrate how good practice can benefit not only the inclusion of a pupil with Down's syndrome but also impact positively on the whole school population.

Since the 1981 Education Act, a succession of parents have placed their children in their local mainstream schools, and while it took about 20 years for the practice to extend to over eighty per cent of primary aged children, it is remarkable how commonplace it has since become. The expectation of many parents and children is to continue inclusive education throughout their school lives. An increasing number of secondary schools are now learning to make the necessary adjustments required to enable the inclusion of pupils of all abilities. Such schools are improving in the same way that primary schools did during the last 25 years.

Some teachers still find the thought of including a child with Down's syndrome in their class daunting, but almost all already have the skills needed to understand and address these children's individual needs. The case studies show how guidance in the DSA Primary and Secondary Education Support Packs looks when put into practice by school staff in regular schools across the country.

The school with the positive attitude towards meeting the needs of all children is always the one that has the least problems. Although each pupil with Down's syndrome should be treated on his or own merit, as other children are, there is a specific learning profile that helps teachers to focus on their strengths and put strategies in place to overcome their difficulties. Given a little training in avoiding difficult or immature behaviour, engaging the child in meaningful activities and understanding the specific learning profile of children with Down's syndrome, schools all over the country are making reasonable adjustments to the way that they work. Those that encourage a problem solving approach with a knowledgeable and proactive special educational needs co-ordinator and time built in for the class teacher and teaching assistant to plan, reap the rewards of being able to demonstrate how well they meet the needs of a whole range of children.

We hope the case studies will encourage schools to take a socially inclusive approach to meeting the needs of children with Down's syndrome.

The DSA continues to work for improved and better focused provision to ensure that young people with Down's syndrome emerge from education with the skills to make the most of their adult lives.

CASE STUDY 1:

Tom G, aged 13.
Churchill Academy,
Churchill, North
Somerset.



Overview:

Tom has been a student at Churchill Academy since the beginning of Year 7. He is the first student with Down's syndrome at the school and he is currently in Year 9. He has two sisters who also attend the school, one is older and one is younger than him.

Churchill has had to learn how to differentiate the curriculum and adjust their assessment procedures for a student who is just coming off the P scales in literacy and numeracy now. This has been a

challenge for a school used to high attainment. Churchill is one of the most academically strong schools in the region and one that regularly tops the secondary schools league tables.

However, what stands out about the provision at Churchill Academy for Tom are the choices they have made about managing support for him in mixed ability classes. Tom receives full-time 1:1 support and the school has been very careful in making decisions about how to manage this support for him.

In primary school it is common for pupils to have one full-time or two part-time teaching assistants (TAs) working with them for the time that they are in lessons. Whilst this works well in primary school, in secondary school support needs to be carefully managed to suit the needs of a student who is getting older, developing in maturity and who finds him/herself in a very different set up to the one they were used to at primary school.

All the TAs know that independent working is to be encouraged, as well as peer interaction, so whenever possible they observe Tom from a distance. Technically, Tom is their priority, but they can help other students too.

(Head of student support)

Sometimes parents worry that their child is losing their entitlement to 1:1 support in the move to secondary school. But, Churchill Academy has found that their students want to be as independent as possible and the school pursues paths that enable each student to individually develop their independence with regard to their own learning.

Inclusive practice:

Churchill Academy discovered that assigning a TA for a particular curriculum area, or faculty, works better for Tom than having one or two TAs assigned to support him across all of his lessons. In this way, Tom quickly got used to associating an individual TA to a particular subject and this has a number of positive benefits for Tom and his education.



Subject specific TAs specialise in a narrow range of subjects, and may find it easier to differentiate lessons because they have a more comprehensive understanding of the topics being taught. Having a selection of TAs working with Tom throughout the day provides opportunities for positive social interactions and enhances his interpersonal skills. Subject specific TAs supporting him also ensures that he is receiving the correct subject information at all times from people who have expertise in the area.

It is very important for Tom to learn to deal with a range of personalities and teaching styles, while at the same time enjoying a consistency of approach within a subject area, encouraging him to become as independent in his learning as possible.

(Head of student support)



The teaching staff work to create opportunities for independent learning in whole-class activities for Tom. Specific periods are designated where he is unsupported or supported by peers rather than staff. When unsupported by a TA, Tom has greater access to his classmates and can engage in everyday student banter with them – one of the reasons that Tom goes to mainstream secondary school in the first place. The school believes that having a TA hovering over Tom could stop him from wanting to take risks and make mistakes, and would hinder his socialisation.

Periods supported by a TA during whole class activities, or group work in class, also often work well, and any kind of work in a separate area is kept to a minimum. The reason Tom is in a mainstream school is to progress academically, of course, but above all to develop his social skills, independence and age-appropriate behaviour. It is important for Tom to access interesting lessons taught by teachers who are subject specialists, with lessons and learning objectives differentiated for him so that he can learn with his peers.

Tom is well organised. He knows his timetable off by heart, is independently mobile around the school site, which is very large, and he goes to and from classes unsupported.

(Head of student support)



Opportunities to mix with typically developing peers are helping Tom to develop friendships and learn age-appropriate behaviour. Social skills and confidence are learned in social situations and Tom is included in the entire range of school activities where taking part is the most important factor, such as clubs, drama productions and sports, which play to Tom's strengths.



Summary:

Essentially, Churchill has taken on board the broader view of secondary schooling and asked the question, 'What are the long term goals for Tom?' If Tom is to become a successful adult, happy about who he is and optimistic about his future, then he needs to become as independent as possible, and it is understood that it will be the years spent at Churchill that will help him get there.

Churchill staff have viewed Tom as an individual with needs like any other student and have developed an insightful means of empowering him and allowing him the autonomy that will serve him well in future life. They have not stunted his development by erecting a safety boundary around him to protect him.



Tom is a shining example of the successful transfer of a student with Down's syndrome to a large mainstream secondary school. His placement is supported by a strong partnership with his family, which was built during Years 5 and 6, and with the expertise of 'Ups and Downs SW'.

Although Tom had a key worker on transfer to Year 7, Tom is exposed to a number of TAs working in faculties. These TAs support him with specific subjects and have formed positive, trusting relationships with him. As well as this, the subject specific TAs work closely with teachers, developing 'P' levels within the subject and supporting teachers with assessment of Tom. The school's reporting system now includes P levels at KS3 (Key Stage 3).



Socially, Tom has had a very successful inclusion and sometimes initially used the 'Oasis' (KS3 inclusion provision for vulnerable students) at social time. However, Tom soon opted to have a less supervised break.

Tom's navigation around the large, complex site was closely monitored at first. However, it was soon clear that Tom, using his own timetable, wished to find his own way to lessons. He is now a capable, independent student, using his peers rather than a TA whenever he is unsure or in need of support.

Tom's successful inclusion has contributed to his levels of happiness and self-esteem. He has grown in confidence and has made friendships in the wider school. All of these positive factors will hopefully mean that Tom will be equipped to deal with the challenges of adult life and that his chances of employment are higher.

(Head of student support)

CASE STUDY 2:

Tom P, aged 14.
Kings of Wessex
Academy, Cheddar,
Somerset.



Overview:

Tom had a successful transfer from his middle school to Kings of Wessex Academy and is now well into his second year at the school. Tom has been popular with his peers throughout his schooling, and this is still the case. His family have been focused on Tom achieving full inclusion in mainstream society, and they have made great efforts to provide Tom with a wide range of school experiences that encourage his interests in the performing arts and in sport in particular.

Kings of Wessex has wholeheartedly embraced Tom's inclusion and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and other members of staff regularly attend training sessions, forums and conferences put on by 'Ups and Downs Southwest'. Members of staff talk about Tom with affection and are keen to include him in every aspect of school life.

The school has put together a creative package of provision for Tom including BTEC Level 2 courses in performing arts and sport, as well as GCSE art and a GCSE-equivalent in IT (which is 100% coursework). Tom is also taking a half-GCSE in RE, and is expected to pass all of these. For maths and English, Tom follows a mix of mainstream lessons and individual tuition and it is likely that he will be entered for Entry Level GCSEs in these subjects.

Tom receives full-time support during lessons from a range of subject specific teaching assistants (TAs) and low key supervision during breaks or changeover times and in a weekly lunchtime rugby club.

It would be fair to say that the staff were a little apprehensive about Tom arriving at the Kings of Wessex. They were nervous because they did not know what to expect and they didn't know if they had the skills to provide what Tom needed.

(SENCo)

The SENCo's first step was to provide staff with a really clear idea of Tom's needs and strengths so they could begin planning the best possible provision for him. Kings' TA's spent time at Tom's middle school watching and working with him to create the links that would make his transition run smoothly. The SENCo also visited and made a video of, and with, Tom, showing a 'day in the life' perspective of a typical school day. This portrayed a realistic view of Tom's needs in terms of differentiation and his relationships with peers and staff, as well as showing his 'ability' and what he could do. This gave the staff at Kings a better idea of the types of learning activity that would suit Tom well.

Staff then had a whole staff training session with 'Ups and Downs SW' and were shown the SENCo's video of Tom. This enabled staff to ask both general and specific questions

in preparation for his arrival. In addition, Tom was invited to visit the school a few times before term started in September. Tom used these visits to take lots of photographs to help him remember key people and places.

Initially, the school decided that Tom should follow the same timetable as his peers so that staff could get a sense of what he enjoyed and what lessons he was progressing well in. Since then they have made some adaptations for additional literacy support and time for him to stay up to date with subjects that will be KS4 choices.

Tom has worked with a range of TAs in lessons as it was felt that in secondary school it would be better for him to develop his social skills rather than relying on just one key adult. Similarly for most lessons Tom was placed in mixed ability classes, which has allowed the staff to provide positive role models for Tom. It has worked particularly well in English, where other students are now providing the majority of support for Tom themselves and a TA is rarely needed to support him in these lessons. The other students enjoy working with Tom and he is really benefiting from the social interaction. He is tremendously proud of his independence and staff are often surprised at what he can achieve when he is able to work without adult support.

Kings are able to offer Tom some lessons and activities beyond the normal curriculum and he has enjoyed doing a course in horticulture. He has been active in sporting activities such as swimming and rugby. He has been part of a 'Big Pitch' enterprise team and has made a news report for the BBC School Report day as part of Media club. These lunchtime activities have meant that Tom has worked in teams outside of his classes and his year group. Whilst staff did speak to his year group in general about issues of inclusion at the start of the year, the students include Tom in an unselfconscious and natural way.

Tom's teachers have had the opportunity to meet regularly and discuss any concerns or successes they have had and they are being encouraged to share good practice. This will be especially important when Tom begins KS4 work with new teachers next year.

Inclusive practice:

The BTEC performing arts class is made up of a group of 27 students and is taught by a subject specialist. Tom's TA was the only other staff member/support in the room, which was a large drama and dance studio with an interactive whiteboard on one wall and a piano on the far side of the room. The subject teacher had arranged all of the tables and chairs in rows facing the whiteboard (and her) and all the students were asked to sit in alphabetical order. As Tom and his TA entered the room, Tom went to sit at his place and his TA sat towards the back and to the side of the room. There was no chair at Tom's desk and the student next to him directed him over to the chairs the other side of the room, where he picked up a chair, brought it over to his place and sat down.

As the subject teacher launched into her whole class introduction, Tom was expected to follow unsupported, and he appeared very happy and relaxed to do so. The teacher talked at a fast pace and had a firm control of the students with high expectations for working behaviour. She continued on to give the students feedback on a recent assignment, detailing the reasons why some were awarded a distinction grade and others a pass and so on. Again, Tom appeared relaxed and at ease, and he occasionally would look over his shoulder and smile at his TA. The subject teacher handed out their assessed assignment to each of the students and instructed them to write their own comments in the space provided. Tom had achieved a pass in the assignment and the teacher had written quite detailed comments and targets for him. Tom wrote down his thoughts in the comment box, and again his LSA left him to get on with it unsupported. All the students were writing now and there was a serious and studious feel to this part of the lesson. Tom continued to work unaided and he wrote using some complete sentences and some key words. On the whole his letter formation was correct and his work was legible.

The students were instructed to move places so that they were sitting alongside their partner. Tom remained where he was and was joined by another student, Nick. Tom and Nick worked together on their ideas for the intended outcomes for the next assignment, each recording notes separately on their own assignment sheet. Again Tom's TA allowed him to work unaided, and occasionally Tom would look over to her, catch her eye and smile. The subject teacher came over to check on their written comments and told Tom that today she wanted him to share his ideas with Nick in order to work towards his next target. She asked Tom if he had understood and Tom repeated her instructions.

The students each had a song sheet of a duet from the musical 'Wicked', and they had to decide which role they were to take on for the rest of the lesson. Tom and Nick quickly conferred and decided what part each was to play and sing and the whole class gathered around the piano. Tom took a music stand and placed his song sheet onto it so that he could follow and sing whilst still looking up; he made a point of turning his blazer collar up and rolling up his sleeves. Once more he looked over his shoulder and smiled at his TA, who was looking on. All the students sang the song together while the teacher accompanied them on the piano. The teacher gave the group some quick feedback and they sang the song again. It was a fast number and Tom had some difficulty keeping up with the text. One of the students next to him realised this and discretely pointed to where they were on the song sheet and Tom was able to carry on. Tom stood tall and his face clearly indicated how much he was enjoying himself.

The subject teacher then instructed the students to go back into their pairs and this time to focus on their own targets. Each pair of students found a space in the room to sing through and act out the number again to a playback version of the song that had been put on the stereo. Tom enjoyed himself immensely and remained on task and focused throughout and Nick directed and supported him in an

entirely natural way. The subject teacher came over to check on their progress and ideas and there was some lovely interaction between her and Tom as she encouraged him to look

Tom contributes well to the class and it wouldn't be the same without him. He may be off doing other activities sometimes, but when he is there it benefits us. Firstly he gives us another perspective of learning: even though he might not find it as easy as some of us, he always gives a 110% and tries his hardest. When we work in a group with him it gives us confidence in ourselves by helping him with his work, it also makes us proud to see him finish an activity successfully.

Whenever there is a game to play Tom is always the first to involve himself and get stuck in. He always makes it more enjoyable for the rest of the class with his imaginative, fun personality. Working in a group with him widens our ideas as he is so imaginative – when we're stuck for a word he will always give us a few.

If ever the class or the teacher have a stressful lesson, by the end of it he will always have us laughing. Also it benefits the class because we all know we need to set him a good example so he knows how he should behave; this means we try to behave better to encourage him to do the same. Tom is a kind hearted, funny and caring boy who will go far in life despite his difficulties, as he copes with them extremely well. He is extremely intelligent and strong willed, so he would do anything to get his point across. To us he is a great friend and the same as any of us. Overall Tom is a great asset to the group and we enjoy his company, ideas and humour.

(Students Lauren and Ryan)



cross and angry as he was playing the part. She also reminded Tom that his target was to share his ideas with his partner. Tom and Nick carried on as before and the two of them worked well together, sharing their ideas. The subject teacher made a note that Tom had achieved his target for today's lesson. She then told each pair to assume their starting positions and they all sang through the song again to the playback. Tom's performance was much improved and at the end he was beaming with satisfaction. They all repeated the task in their pairs twice more and Tom participated energetically, all the while looking proudly over to his TA who was watching him from a short distance away.



I am enjoying my time at Kings of Wessex School. I have had many special achievements that I have worked for. I like being in my subject classes and I like speaking to people. I like reading books in the library and I have enjoyed studying Shakespeare and Macbeth in English. I like drama and acting. Learning maths has helped me to work out prices for food and know how much things cost.

I really like playing rugby on the field – there is loads of space. My drum lessons help me stay in tune and in note. I enjoy doing freestyle with loads of energy given out and I get into the rock groove. I enjoy ICT because I think I am quite good at it and I like searching on Google.

My teachers are happy and fun and help me with my work. I like our uniform because it is awesome and comfy. I like the colours too. I like eating by myself and playing with my friends outside. I like to see and be with the girls – they put me in a good mood and make me happy.

(Tom)

Summary:

What stands out about Kings of Wessex School is the quality of relationships between the staff and Tom, and most importantly between Tom and his peers. Their affection for him is genuine and in particular, Tom's partner Nick was an excellent role model for him and his subtle natural support meant that Tom was fully included. At school Tom is happy and his self-esteem is high.

The staff have worked hard to establish good positive relationships with Tom. He was largely encouraged to work alongside, and with, his peers. And when he required more individual support from a TA, the support was effective and ensured that Tom had access to the same work as the other students.

In his BTEC performing arts lesson the subject teacher talked directly to Tom during the lesson. Targets were clear to him and referred to directly by his teacher. There was a range of short, focused and clearly defined tasks and the teacher's expectations for working behaviour and for work output were high, both for the class of students as a whole and in particular for Tom. She checked on Tom's understanding several times during the lesson and his successes were celebrated. Tom remained focused throughout the entire lesson. Although he was largely expected to work unaided, or supported by a peer, Tom would regularly look over to his TA for her approval and this gave him the reassurance he needed to take risks and be independent both in his performance and in his written work.

There's no escaping the fact that transition to secondary school is a worrying time for a parent of a child with Down's syndrome. Tom went to a middle school, which meant that he was two years older than most before he had to make the move. All the same, moving on to senior school meant leaving behind the security of staff who knew, liked and worked well with Tom, as well as leaving a campus he found familiar and safe and a placement that had worked really well for four years. In its place, we faced a large open campus, a new body of students, many of whom may never have encountered a person with Down's syndrome before and a staff body who were undoubtedly facing the prospect with trepidation.

The transition process helped allay fears on all sides. Relaxed, friendly meetings on the familiar ground of his feeder school, led by the middle school SENCo, really set the tone. The SENCo made it clear to us, and to the secondary school SENCo, that Tom was a valued and much-liked member of the school. Tom made a series of visits to the new school which meant that by the time September came, he was already entirely comfortable with the school site and he knew his way around and could name most of the key members of staff. The new school SENCo arranged for every member of the support team to spend at least one day at the middle school with Tom during the summer term so that they all had a more informed understanding of his strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes. And a full staff INSET from the 'Ups & Downs' Specialist Advisor was really well attended (even the school groundsmen attended) and meant that subject teachers could feel more prepared.

We're at the end of his first year at secondary school now and it's been a really great start. Tom is fully included and gets himself around the school between lessons without support. He has thrown himself into the life of the school, with the help of an incredibly dedicated SENCo and learning support team. Certainly, some subject teachers have been more successful than others at ensuring that Tom can fully access their lessons, but on balance, if one or two things aren't entirely perfect, it seems entirely appropriate to let them slide. What matters is that Tom is settled, happy, immersed in the life of the school and gaining in independence every week. We couldn't be more pleased.

(Tom's mum)

CASE STUDY 3:

Jesse, aged 14.
Crispin Academy,
Street, Somerset.

Overview:

Jesse has translocation Down's syndrome, a form of the condition where some chromosome 21 material is attached to another chromosome, rather than the typical presentation of an extra chromosome 21 in all cells.

Although at first glance Jesse may not have the characteristic features of Down's syndrome, he has the same specific learning profile as someone with trisomy 21 and his learning is significantly delayed. Jesse also has hearing loss in both ears and he wears hearing aids. Despite this, he speaks well. He comes from a farming family and is the oldest of four brothers. Like his brothers, Jesse is expected to help out on the farm when not at school.

Jesse is in Year 10, Key Stage 4 (KS4) at Crispin School. He has attended mainstream schools throughout his education, transferring from a local primary school to Crispin School along with his peer group in Year 7. Crispin is a large mixed comprehensive school catering for students aged 11-16. The latest Ofsted report rated the school as being "good with many outstanding features".

Jesse was the first of three students with Down's syndrome to attend Crispin School, each student very different in terms of ability and personality. The school has been on a significant learning journey in terms of including students with additional needs and learning disabilities and thanks to the head and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), who have put inclusion at the heart of the school development plan, it is now regarded as one of the most inclusive secondary schools in the region.

Crispin has been eager to receive regular support and advice from the Ups and Downs Schools Advisory Service, which also set up a local SENCo forum so that schools like Crispin can forge links, exchange ideas and information, and provide each other with mutual support. The schools recognise that on-going support is invaluable in ensuring the successful inclusion of students like Jesse in mainstream schools.

However, this support did not exist when Jesse transferred from his primary school, and so Crispin School received little support from outside agencies. As Jesse was their first pupil with Down's syndrome, the school had no previous knowledge or experience of the needs of a student with Down's syndrome or their specific learning profile. They relied on the school's learning support team's existing experience of students with moderate learning difficulties. In fact, they only knew they were getting a student with Down's syndrome during Jesse's Year 6 annual review.

Transition visits were arranged for the last half of the summer term, when Jesse visited the school along with some other vulnerable pupils. It was decided to set up a Year 7 nurture group of twelve students in the school's "Flexible Learning Centre" ("Flex"), following a primary model. The school employed a primary specialist teacher and the twelve pupils were taught in a single classroom. From the start, the SENCo felt uneasy with this arrangement – "It didn't feel like inclusion" – and it was abandoned after one year.

In Year 8, Jesse was placed in both mixed ability mainstream classes and lower ability classes, with support from a range of teaching assistants (TAs). After a number of pupil observations, it was recommended that Jesse be taken out of the lower ability groups, where the other students were not the best role models, and where Jesse was at risk of becoming increasingly reticent.

When considering what new groups, or classes, Jesse was to attend, the school first and foremost looked at the other students who made up the groups and judged carefully whether they would be supportive role models for Jesse, or not, rather than trying to match the set to Jesse's academic level. Lessons would need to be differentiated whether Jesse was in the top set or the bottom group so choosing teachers who were more willing and able to adapt their teaching methods and differentiate the curriculum to meet Jesse's needs was an important factor too.

Initially, the subject teachers were anxious and uneasy about this, being unused to differentiating the curriculum to the degree needed, "But we thought we weren't going to become an inclusive school by taking away the challenge from the teachers" (SENCo).

Four years on from Jesse's arrival, some subject teachers now feel so confident in their abilities to differentiate lessons that one of them said to the SENCo that she did not feel as if she needed the support of the TA in class to include the latest pupil with Down's syndrome to transfer to Crispin, and was that alright?

With the headteacher's support, Jesse was placed in high ability sets for some subjects and mixed ability for others, and he was subsequently observed over a number of lessons. His behaviour and attitude improved as his peer group was now more mature in their outlook.

Inclusive practice:

Now that Jesse is in KS4, the school looks at his curriculum and provision with ever increasing flexibility, conscious of meeting the needs of someone who is developing in maturity and who wants to be treated in a socially appropriate way. Jesse has a statement of special educational needs (SEN) and receives 'School Action Plus' funding. Crispin has been able to use his funding to create a curriculum with varying levels of support to meet his specific needs within each of the subject areas he continues to follow. Some funding has been used to buy his own laptop, equipped with software such as 'Clicker 5', which he takes from lesson to lesson. Weekly horse riding and horse management sessions for part of his Year 9, as well as two days out at a local college, have also been funded.

For the three days a week he is at Crispin, Jesse follows a range of subjects that focus on progression in specific key areas in his core functional skills (both literacy and numeracy) and other subjects that he is interested and most able in (science, ICT, PE and beliefs and values), with varied levels of support from a range of TAs.

For maths, Jesse participates in a mixed ability GCSE group, with in-class support from a TA. While the rest of the class work on the GCSE curriculum, Jesse works on improving his functional maths skills in number, time and money. For English, Jesse is in a mixed ability GCSE group, with in-class support from a TA, and has some 1:1 teaching in the "Flex" for reading and spelling. At this point (autumn term Year 10) the school is still open-minded about the possibility of entering Jesse in GCSEs in maths and English language because of his continuing progress in these areas.

For science, Jesse is part of a mixed ability BTEC class and he receives in-class support from a subject specialist TA, who also supports some other students. His ICT, PE and beliefs and values classes are also mixed ability. Support is in-class and from a general classroom TA except for PE where he does not need any support at all. Neither does he need support

during lunch/break times, nor change-over times between lessons. He no longer wants to attend any clubs (he feels he has grown out of it), but likes to do his own thing: "I like to hang out with my mates." (Jesse)

Jesse spends two days a week at Bridgwater College. On Fridays he goes to the main campus on a BTEC construction course which he chose from a range of options. Crispin School pays for Jesse and two other students to take part in this course, where they share support from a TA provided by the school.

Jesse spends Mondays at the Cannington Centre on a "Skills for Working Life" course, along with other students from Crispin and other local secondary schools. His school pays Bridgwater College for this course. Although it is a SEN course, it also caters for a wide range of vulnerable students.

Over the course of the year, Jesse is experiencing a range of taster courses (horticulture, small animal care, and a Jamie Oliver home cooking award, amongst others). This will give him a better idea of the options open to him once he transfers to college. He continues to work on developing his core functional skills in literacy and maths (particularly money) within a small group supported by a school TA. The feel of the centre is very different to that of a school. The students are given free rein and are treated in a more adult way. There is a student common room, where they can chill out over break and lunch without additional support.

Summary:

Jesse is well motivated and remains on task throughout his lessons. He makes appropriate contributions and he wants to get things done. More importantly, his self-esteem is high and he is relaxed and confident enough to allow his own personality to flourish.

Appearance and attitude are important to Jesse, as they are for many adolescents. He wants to be treated like everybody else. He does not like to be seen to be different or receive special treatment. This has been the overwhelming factor in Jesse's character throughout his time at Crispin School, and one which both the school and his family have had to come to terms with, and allows for some flexibility.

Jesse does not see himself as having a disability. He will often take out his hearing aids and refuse to put them in because he feels self-conscious wearing them. Sometimes he will compromise and agree to put one in. Jesse is reluctant to read and is not currently motivated by daily reading practice. The school has recently taken the decision not to persist with continued extra input, and to respect Jesse's wishes: "I've been trying to read since I was in primary school."

Now that he is maturing, Jesse is trying to assert his rights as an individual and as people have got to know him better they are giving him the level of trust he desires so strongly.

I feel he didn't have a voice before... Jesse has been very much a trailblazer for us here at Crispin. He has made us realise that inclusion can work. We started by thinking 'would following a primary model work better?' and we realised that no, it wasn't. It's made us be braver about being a secondary school. Some people don't know that Jesse has even got Down's syndrome. And this can sometimes go against him, especially regarding teachers' attitudes towards his behaviour. But it also has meant that people have held age-appropriate expectations for him... Maybe this shows that we need to treat him like anyone else...?

(SENCo)

CASE STUDY 4:

Misha, aged 15.
King Edward VI
Community College,
Totnes, Devon.



Overview:

Misha lives at home in a small village with her parents and brother, who is in the sixth form. She has another older brother who is currently at University. Misha was born in Mexico where her English parents were working. She was born with a heart problem which was repaired at Great Ormond Street Hospital when she was 9 months old. The family returned to Mexico, but soon came back concerned about the low blood platelet count first noticed during her previous treatment.

Misha was admitted to hospital where she was treated for acute myeloid leukaemia. The cancer was aggressive, but she responded well to six months of intense chemotherapy. When Misha was 5 years old she developed pneumonia following a chest infection. At seven years old she had a further, final heart surgery at Bristol's children's hospital to correct a valve defect. Misha has nystagmus, mild long sight and wears glasses, without which she requires a minimum of N18 size print. She had problems with glue ear when younger but hearing tests are now normal – however, she dislikes loud and unexpected noise.

Misha and her brothers all attended the local playgroup and the village school, an inclusive environment supporting around 130 pupils and Misha now attends King Edward VI Community College.

Misha has many out of school interests and is a valued member of the swimming group. She was one of three students who swam to raise money for Children in Need – she was very determined and achieved six lengths. She decided to continue her efforts and swam ten lengths each time for the following three weeks.

Misha attends a fortnightly language and social skills group based on a 'Symbol UK' model with trained co-workers supervised by a speech and language therapist (SALT).

Misha is a very positive member of the group – her language skills are good, but the group provides her with an opportunity to consolidate previous skills learned in a setting that she is confident in. Misha's home life is so different she brings a fresh approach to 'Juice bar chat'. Because her family do a lot together she sometimes forgets she is not at home where everyone can understand her and needs to be reminded to slow down and look at people to see if they have understood. She is an excellent role model and clearly gains in self-esteem and confidence with others outside of her family circle.

(SALT leader)

Misha enjoys going to a youth club for teenagers with special educational needs. Initially

she found this quite challenging as she was not used to being just with young people with learning disabilities. She goes riding on the moors with her family at a regular trekking stable. She has overnight respite care once a month which she loves. Her respite family are both swimming teachers and she overcame her fear of water with them. Her family and friends also do lots of hiking and walking together. Misha has represented her school in sporting challenges at a special inspirational games day organised by the local college of further education and has competed in a boccia sports competition.

King Edward's is a large specialist arts college with around 1800 students. There are students with Down's syndrome across the year groups and staff understand they are young people first, who happen to have Down's syndrome, and that they are all individuals in their own right. The school hosts bi-annual support group meetings for staff supporting children with Down's syndrome in the area and manage a resource library stocked by funding from the local authority. The entire staff body also received training from a specialist educational psychologist with ongoing annual training for all new curricular staff and teaching assistants (TAs).

Misha's parents chose King Edward's because it was their choice for the whole family, and they believe not only in the benefits of mainstream education for Misha but also in the benefit of studying with Misha for the other students. The school has a good special educational needs (SEN) department supporting inclusion in mixed ability classes and Misha has friends who are typically developing, as well as other students with Down's syndrome or special needs. She has always had a good relationship with the students in her tutor group.

Staff at King Edward's knew Misha from her many transition visits during Year 6 when she learned to navigate the two-site school campus and the busy bridge joining them, read a timetable, sample all of the curricula lessons and use the busy dining hall.

Misha travels to school on the school bus. She is an extrovert who loves drama and singing, leading the singing on the bus. It is now a service bus so she has had to learn to press the bell for her stop. Misha loves the social life of school and also loves the 'Learning Exchange' programme. She likes maths and science best but reading is also good. The best thing about school is packed lunch in 'Learning Support' with her friends. Misha has also made new friends from other schools involved in the 'Learning Exchange' programme.

Inclusive practice:

Misha has full-time TA support from six TAs who are all subject based. Alternative accreditation 'ASDAN' is available from Year 9 and the 'Learning Exchange' in KS4. Each student has their own timetable based on their individual needs and this involves attending mixed ability classes in most subjects and some lower set placements. There is the opportunity for small group work to develop language and social skills and time for 1:1 work on specific language skills, writing and reading practice. Individual timetables are available on-line with descriptors of the small group and individual work available, covering a range of areas. KS4 allows for this same flexibility and students attend different provisions and work experience, tied into a clear pathway.

The language sessions have been developed in conjunction with a local parent group 'DownSouth' and advice is bought in from a SALT. The work has been developed by a higher level TA who is extremely skilled and has been trained as a co-worker using the 'Symbol UK' approach to language work. All staff can access resources from the Down's Syndrome Association, giving information about students with Down's syndrome, examples of differentiated materials, B squared and curriculum mapping, all on the school portal.

In Year 9 Misha was in mixed ability lessons for 85% of the curriculum with the rest of her time spent in lower sets (maths, English and science), small group work for language, social skills and sex and relationships education with the group of students with Down's syndrome, and some 1:1 work around communication skills and reading. Misha scored a reading age

of 7.9 and a spelling age of 6.1 years. Her word knowledge has improved dramatically and she demonstrates a love of reading. She understands what she is reading and uses inflection appropriately. In handwriting her motor skills have improved; she is able to produce very neat pencil control practice sheets; her letter formation is slowly improving and her concentration skills and focus are pleasing. Misha's behaviour, attendance and classwork are excellent in all areas. Misha proves to be great fun in the language group. She works well with other students and her work is thoughtful. Misha comes up with some relevant ideas and comments; she's also got a great sense of humour.

Misha is keen to participate in 'SuccessMaker Maths' and really enjoys the computer programme, reflected in her score of 59% averaged out over the year. She has mastered 89% of all the tasks set which include addition, subtraction, measurement, number concepts and word problems. She works hard on worksheets with minimal support. Misha works well with other students, helping where she can. She has worked hard this year to cement a solid mathematical basis to build on in KS4.

At her year 9 transitional annual review, Misha was working at NC 1.8 in English, NC1.2 in maths, and NC2.8 in science. In Year 10 the syllabus is based on setting for science, maths and English with the rest of the timetable individualised to the student, and involving specialist group work. In addition to the three core subjects, Misha works with her social skills and language group, as well as:

- 1:1 communication sessions
- drumming and dance lessons
- weekly practice in handwriting skills, reading, numeracy and key ICT groups
- 'ASDAN' life skills
- PE including keep fit machines and swimming in the local indoor pool.

Misha loves, and is good, at performing arts, especially dance and drama. The 'Learning Exchange' programme covers modules in performance, dance and outward bound activities at venues outside of the school. Her parents had wanted Misha to access the performing arts subjects (part of a BTEC qualification) so that she could continue to take part in school productions as she had done in Years 7-9. Unfortunately for Misha, the school could not offer this because of the emphasis on written submissions and essays on the BTEC course.

Chemistry, physics and biology are all taught by different subject teachers each with their own style. Misha is able to adapt to this, supported by the lead TA working on differentiating science for students with learning needs.

Strategies used to help Misha achieve include:

- the provision of visual supports
- simplifying staff language
- the use of a word bank for each subject to store/write/define key words
- putting key words into a 'Mind Map' in sequence to allow Misha to retrieve and use in a sentence or paragraph to show her comprehension of the subject
- Misha should sit near the board and wear her glasses.

One day a week is spent out of school at various venues following 'Learning Exchange' modules. King Edward's students work alongside other students from both mainstream schools and special schools and new friendships have developed as a result of this. One module involved students spending an evening and a night at a centre for students with learning disabilities to enhance skills like cooking, living together, going into town etc. Misha loved being with her friends away from home.

King Edward's are clear on how to differentiate for Misha's needs, taking into account the specific learning profile for students with Down's syndrome. A lead TA co-ordinates the team and is the contact for parents to discuss any issues. Her parents feel that this model is key to the success of Misha's placement. Mum comments 'When the TAs are good the whole process is good'.

Science lessons are taught in a small group setting. One particular lesson was about liquids, solids and gases and involved the group watching a short video, discussions, individual tasks based on a differentiated worksheet and finally a board game around facts on the topic. Resources provided by the TA made excellent use of 'Widgit' software and were perfect for Misha's vision and her level of learning, using bold, uncluttered format, print size N14-18, clear diagrams/illustrations and plenty of room for Misha to write. The science teacher also gave Misha individual support during the lesson, explaining concepts to her and encouraging her to consider the size and legibility of her writing.

Misha's progress in science through the year has been recorded using a combination of worksheets, as well as, written and photographic evidence of practical sessions. Misha clearly enjoys science. The board game was fun and allowed the students to demonstrate their knowledge. This approach is typical of how work is differentiated for students across the curricular subjects. The teacher and TA had also created booklets on individual science topics, which provide a brilliant resource.

I love working with Misha – she's such a character but she also learns well – when you take the time to revisit her learning in different ways, in science topics, for example, it is really rewarding to find out how much she has retained and I feel that she really learns well.

(TA)

Homework has always been an issue for Misha. She previously was given homework, but her parents found that it was not easy to apply to what Misha was doing in school and Misha resented being helped saying 'Mum you are not my teacher.'

Since Year 10 Misha has not had homework and this works better for her. At a recent parents evening staff were pleased with how well she is doing in school and noted how happy and co-operative she is. Her Mum feels that her older brother has been a good role model for her.

Summary:

Misha is not excluded from anything because she has Down's syndrome, and her school work has been differentiated well so that she can function as a typical student. Her curriculum in Year 10 gives a real small school feel. Misha is part of a KS4 group that suits her current needs and her particular way of learning is suitably addressed to enable her to succeed.

Inclusion – one of the best things for Misha is learning what the other typically developing students learn. She in turn has had good role models around her all the time. She has never been treated differently and everyone has always had high expectations of her. This is why she has done so well and her environment has been optimised to enable her to develop. Her peers are now her friends with Down's syndrome. If Misha had been the only student with Down's syndrome in her school then maybe it wouldn't have been such a positive experience for her.

(Misha's mum)

CASE STUDY 5:

Lily, aged 17.
Year 11 Pilton Community
College, Devon.



Overview:

Lily lives at home with her parents in the country. She has an elder sister Tess aged 22 who is away at University. Lily has always suffered from a mild fluctuating hearing loss due to glue ear. In the past she has had grommets fitted which fell out and she is still kept under review. She has been fitted with digital hearing aids which she wore until she was 12. Parents and Lily then decided not to use the hearing aids as the hearing loss was so mild – parents have

queried whether she would have been followed up for hearing if it wasn't that she had Down's syndrome (DS) i.e. was there really a need? Lily manages well without hearing aids.

Lily wears glasses all the time for long sight and as she has grown older her eyesight has improved. She was born with a heart valve which hadn't closed before birth but this closed naturally when she was a baby.

Lily went to a small but very inclusive village Primary school which has two classes – one for Key Stage 1 and one for Key Stage 2. She transferred to Pilton Community College which has recently become an Academy School for Foreign Languages and supports about 1300 students and Lily was the first student to attend who had DS. The Primary school and the College both received training from the Specialist EP re transition and receiving a student with DS and the transition was excellently handled. The EP provided a report for all staff teaching Lily outlining Lily's strengths and weaknesses and a list of strategies to use. The first sentence read: 'Lily's needs in school are the same as any student – to have the opportunity to learn, to make friends, to enjoy school and to be happy'.

The school and Lily have certainly embraced this 100%! The school also provides the venue for the Support group for staff supporting children with DS in the North Devon area which is held twice a year. It also manages the DS Resources library for the area. Staff are regular contributors at the annual Secondary Support day for staff supporting students with DS.

Transition first of all involved Lily visiting with her mum, at the beginning of the spring term in Year 6. From then on she was accompanied by her TA on several visits to help her become familiar with the Pilton Campus and Community. During this time she joined in different lessons with the Nurture Group. Over the next 6 months the time increased to allow her to experience lunchtime and eventually all day. By the end of the summer term she was attending secondary school for 3 days a week. To prepare for the beginning of term a visual timetable was made and a communication book to aid her independence around school, this also improved her speech and language skills.

Lily in year 7 had significant mobility problems including poor balance, hypotonia (floppy muscles at joints) and ankles that had not formed properly. At home she had a wheelchair for longer journeys and moving about a large school campus may be difficult for her. She needed help to get up and down stairs and staff monitored how long it took her to get from

lesson to lesson so that when she needed extra time she could leave a lesson 5 minutes early. Over time Lily has built up her independence and she now makes her own way to all lessons over a large campus.

Lily travelled to school on the bus with an escort for a short time but proved that she could manage this task on her own. Lily had a very successful transition to Pilton Community College and in the first year of school Lily won an award for her effort. Lily is now in Year 11 working towards GCSE Art, Entry Level Science and several ASDAN awards. Lily was in all curricular mainstream lessons with setting for Maths and English and some group and 1:1 – swimming, horse riding and speech and language work until Key Stage 4.

In Year 9 she was in the following mainstream subjects, all with large classes, with TA support: Art, Music, Technology, Drama, Science and History. She had support of a communication book as her articulation was poor and she also used signing. This book enabled Lily to tell staff and pupils where she was going and what she was doing – very necessary as before it's use she was frequently sent back to Learning Support!

The College currently supports 3 students with DS – one in year 8, one in year 9 and Lily in year 11. All three students are placed in year groups one year below their chronological age, and have funding for full-time TA support (0.8 LA; 0.2 school). Each is supported by a team of TAs who are curriculum based and each has a lead TA based in Learning Support. Learning Support are available to produce differentiated materials for all subjects. The subject teachers who make most use of this facility are: Science, RE, Humanities – History.

Lily is working at P level 8 and NC level 1 across subjects. She is supported by 6 TAs – 3 are based in learning support and 3 are subject based covering Art, PE and Science. Lily is only supported as and when she needs it. Lily attends GCSE Art and PE within mainstream lessons, she studies Science in a smaller lower set group. English is taught in Learning Support. She also works as part of a group of 6-8 year 11 students who meet in Learning Support, who all have varying needs including a girl taking GCSE's who needs the support of a small group. There are 5 Life Skills lessons over a two week timetable.

Lily continues to have speech and language work on a 1:1 basis and a Speech and Language Therapist (SALT) sees her 4 times every half term and provides a programme of work for school to complete. Lily's understanding is at about a three word level. A group of three students go out to shop for lunch which they then cook and eat once a week. Maths is taught in a small group in Learning Support – the rest of the group are from years 7, 8 and 9 and this works well for all of them. (ASDAN milestone 6 – Everyday Life.)

Observation of a Life Skills lesson in Learning Support:

6 students of varying abilities including a student in a wheelchair attended the lesson. (The school is fully accessible and has a disabled toilet with wet room, hoist etc). The group were studying for their ASDAN awards in Personal and Social Development – students' study at different levels – Lily is studying for Level 1 and the rest of the group for Level 2 or 3. The tasks are the same – it is the level of recording which is different so, for example, Lily can have her evidence submitted as photos of her completed tasks as well as some written work. The work and worksheets were pre prepared and the lesson was taken by an Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) with another TA to support students as and when required.

The task was following up work that had already been done around Healthy eating and the group had a worksheet showing a variety of foods with pictures and words written underneath. The task was to prepare a healthy menu for a day covering breakfast, lunch and dinner and allowing one snack/treat. Much discussion took place around what to include and Lily participated fully, speaking clearly in sentences and only needing guidance to finalise her choices and cut and paste them. The HLTA prompted discussion about the sequence of the day and Lily was asked: 'What is the meal before lunch?' Lily answered and then described her breakfast – humus

and breadsticks (every day!) and scrambled egg and milk (something that the group had previously cooked for a breakfast which they prepared and ate).

The HLTA asked: 'Is it healthy to have chocolate, cake, crisps, biscuits and doughnuts all in one day?' Group discussion followed as to why not and then each student asked to choose one snack of choice for their menu. It was good inclusive practice and the students all supported each other.

Observation of a PE lesson:

This was a mainstream lesson in the gym for year 11 students with 21 in the group – some away/exams. A high standard of good behaviour was maintained throughout the session by all students. A TA within the PE department lesson supported Lily when required. The students initially did a one minute run to warm up which Lily completed with the group; they then did stretches which again Lily fully participated in.

Indoor rounders was to be played. The teacher reminded students of the rules and each player had 2 turns (unless out in the first round) before fielders and batters changed over. There was time for 3 complete games and at each new game the rules were changed slightly to make it more skilful. A student who had arthritis which was affecting her badly that day was also fully included as score keeper – scores were reviewed after each 'innings' and competition was fierce.

Large PE mats provided the 'posts' in each corner of the gym and a mat was in the centre for the bowlers as well as a mat for the batter to stand on. The students used a cricket bat and a hard ball but Lily used a tennis racquet and a soft ball and this enabled her to participate fully, emitting great whops of joy as she ran from one base to the other.

What was particularly striking was how the other students without being told (and this was not her usual PE group) automatically adapted their playing style so that Lily had an equal opportunity to compete – for example rolling the ball from base to base to try to get her out instead of throwing it. There was spontaneous applause for Lily every time she made it to the next base.

Lily needed no support for batting but the TA stood behind her for fielding to help if any catches came her way – Lily was then able to throw to base without any need for help. Lily was allowed to catch and throw with two hands whereas the other students had to do this one handed. The bowler bowled from a shorter distance giving her a greater opportunity to hit the ball (which she did each time!)

Summary:

The areas of most progress in year 11 are Lily's total independence around the school and her improvement in clarity of speech such that she no longer needs her Communication book with her to allow staff and peers to understand her – she now speaks in sentences which are articulated clearly. Lily is always well behaved with a great sense of humour. Her reading has also improved tremendously – she started reading at Level 1/2 in year 7 and now reads at Level 4/5. She is completing Science Plus (OCR). She still struggles with her Maths.

Staff reports for Lily for year 11

Art & Design: Lily has an enthusiastic approach to art and has enjoyed the work completed so far. I have been particularly impressed with the quality of Lily's textiles and photography work.

Core Science: Lily enjoys Science lessons. Her punctuality is improving and she apologises for any lateness. Some of the concepts taught are particularly tricky to understand but Lily works well with support and completes all tasks set.

English Language: Lily's speech has continued to improve which has helped her independence. Her reading is continuing to improve. She is able to write a small selection of words unaided, and also likes to make her own sentences.

Life Skills: Lily is a pleasure to have in the class and tries hard with good manners. We have been looking at parenting and are now starting to study the options and issues of moving on from Pilton.

Mathematics: Lily has been using her Maths skills in Everyday Living work, weighing and counting ingredients, shopping and paying for it. She has enjoyed her cooking lessons where she has been learning to cook everyday meals.

PE: Lily has continued to work well in Year 11 PE. She has willingly got involved in the class activity and has been very enthusiastic in her approach. She has really enjoyed aerobics and has worked energetically with all the girls.

The inclusion in PE is very good and for Lily it is very beneficial. Lily expresses herself well and all the students are happy for her to take part. Communication between the lead TA and myself is excellent and we communicate after every PE session and work out if anything needs to be changed.

(TA for PE)

Form Tutor's report: (Lily has had the same form tutor since year 7). What a pleasure it has been to read through Lily's reports from her subject teachers. I am very glad that she has always remained so positive and enthusiastic towards all aspects of her work across the whole subject range. Lily is developing a sound sense of personal responsibility and a more mature attitude towards her peers. It is pleasing to see that Lily is working so well this year. Lily has always been an asset to the group and it is a pleasure working with her.

Inclusion here is fantastic, amazing. Lily is treated no differently to any of the other students. Lily can now initiate conversations and is completely independent around the school campus – she no longer needs to use her conversation boards to make herself understood.

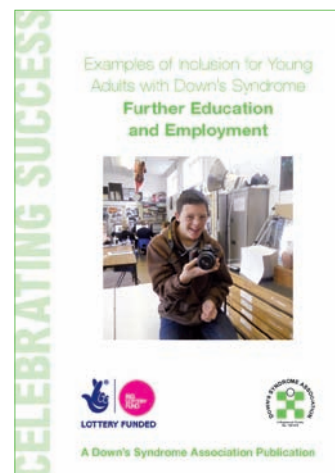
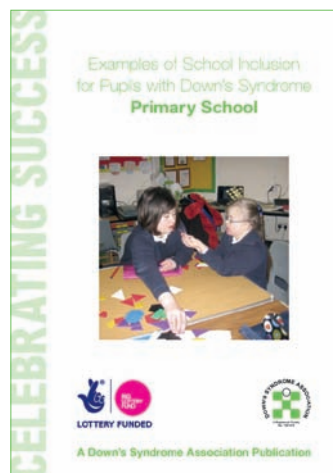
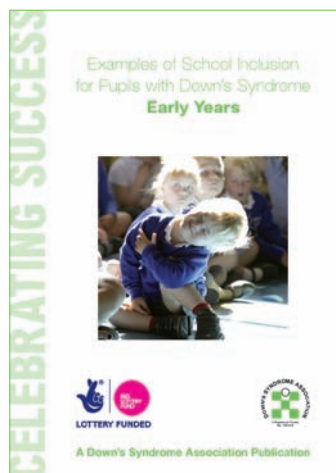
(TA Learning Support (who has supported Lily both at Primary School and secondary school providing a really successful link during transition), and the lead TA jointly)

Transition from Primary to Secondary was amazing. We were concerned about the move from a small village school to a large secondary school – but it was great. Lily has school mates in school like everyone else – outside of school it is more difficult because we live out in the sticks!

Differentiation has been tackled really well and the school has been very receptive. One year one teacher was critical of Lily in her report – about Lily not completing her homework in time (History) we went straight to the head and it was all sorted and all staff report positively now. Communication has always been very honest and open from us to staff and vice versa – any 'hiccups' are always amicably and immediately resolved. The cross curricular approach represents a real forward change in thinking and our experience of the school has always been very positive. We are now uneasy about the transfer onto Further Education!

(Lily's parents)

Also available in this series:





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