



**Re -evaluation for Investing in Children Membership
Belmont Comprehensive School Community Arts College
Sensory Support Service**

I met with some young people within Belmont Comprehensive School who receive support from the Sensory and Communication Support Service.

Brad (Yr9), Kyle (Yr11), Gary (Yr11), Laura (Yr10), Ryan (Yr7), Hayley (Yr11), Hayley (Yr11) Sam (Yr9)

I asked the young people about their school and if they were happy with the level of support they are given –

“ Yes I am happy with the support.”

“ You can talk to the staff who support us easily, sometimes the mainstream teachers are hard to talk to.”

“ When we are in lessons we get enough support, happy with the support, sometimes we get too much support!”

“ Support teachers sometimes distance themselves away from us, which is good because then they are there when you need them!”

“ If you are finding it hard in a lesson, the support staff will move you out of the lesson and take you to the resource base to help you!”

The young people expressed a few issues they had, which involved – having to sit at the front of the classroom –

“ I have to sit at the front of the classroom, this can be quite annoying, but I know that it’s for my own good!”

“ At least we get to get out of classes early to beat the mad rush!”

During excursions the young people just wanted to ‘hang out’ with their friends as they feel they don’t get enough time just to be ‘normal’, they did express that they understand support staff are just concerned about their safety.

“ Staff give us a choice about trips, if you and the staff think it’s safe then you can go on the trip.”

“ Year 11’s can’t go on trips because of their GCSE’s but when others go on trips we are allowed to wear our own clothes, staff make us a buffet which we really enjoy.”

Dialogue that has resulted in change.

The year 11 young people from the HI and VI departments wanted to arrange a day trip to go to the trampoline centre, to go for lunch and finish the outing off by going ten pin bowling.

Support staff assisted the young people by helping them apply for money from Connections and the Key fund.

“ We had a great day!!”

“ We get to fill in questionnaires every year, this lets the staff know what we are happy about or unhappy about, it’s good to give your views.”

Gary talked about I.L.S (Independent Living Skills)

“ It’s great, we get taught things like, how to make cups of tea and stuff like that, we have it once every 7 weeks in school, it’s only for the VI students, maybe the HI should have it as well.”

Gary talked about his positive work experience he had within Mrs Seaman’s office –

“ Nearly every week, which was a Wednesday, I was a worker in the office, I used the computers, shredded paper, made cups of tea, this helped me with my independence! I enjoyed working in the environment. “

Gary explained that now his GCSE’s are coming up soon, he has to concentrate on his school work.

Jan Seaman supports the young people on a daily basis, she explained that it was very difficult to arrange work experience for VI students, Jan didn’t want the young people to be denied this experience, and she felt the students could work within her office and gain valuable skills which also promotes independence.

Visual Impairment (VI)

Jan talked about the curriculum stating –

“ looking at the curriculum you can see it’s very visual, that’s why we have a lot of support to offer!”

Jan explained that she takes the young people’s time tables and decides where her teacher’s are going to support.

Jan highlighted ICT as extremely important, she explained that they have various computer programmes which speak (supernova). Blind children can access 70 – 75% of the lesson, excluding graphs and pictures.

ICT may open doors for the young people as they may wish to enter into admin orientated careers.

Young people have carried out their work experience within Jan’s office, the young people were 80% independent working as technicians.

Jan explained –

“You have to look at the child’s level of impairment, it’s about a balance, including

delivering oral input.”

Hearing impairment (HI)

Jan described the level of support for the HI young people –

“ The young people can see, it’s the linguistic side, speed and delivery of the curriculum and their understanding of it, everything is language, there is different terminology for every subject. “

Jan feels that the curriculum can be very difficult for the young people, stating that the curriculum has to have flexibility, the young people have a right to choose their subjects in year 10.

Young people have an opportunity to complete an end of year questionnaire, stating what they like and dislike about the support they are receiving, the results of the questionnaires will be in the yearly report which will be seen by the head of learning and support.

The questionnaires are adapted to suit individual needs.

I asked Jan if the young people get to go on excursions, she replied –

“ Any kind of trips the young people have a right to go on, support staff would assist them, they have equal access. “

Every young person will have a review, this stems from “Every Child Matters” teachers will write a report on the young person’s achievement/development etc. The teacher will also gather views of any other members of staff who know the young person.

Jan stated that the young people are involved within the review process from age 11 years old, they have an opportunity to express like and dislikes.

Recommendations from the young people.

The young people stated that they are allowed in the resource base when it’s raining, their friends who aren’t supported by the resource base aren’t allowed in.

“ We would like our friends to be able to come into the resource base!”

Jan and other members of staff assured me that the young people’s friends are allowed into the resource base!

Young people explained that HI students have a variety of activities such as crafts/sign language etc... at break times.

The VI students don’t have any activities available for them at break times, they would like to have some activities within their breaks, so they don’t have to be cold outside!

I feel that this service works well as young people’s voices and rights are central to the service provided.

The young people I spoke with are dependant on the staff team and dependant on those

adults to support them in a sensitive, caring way, as individuals they face extra challenges every day and have to trust the staff team to make these challenges easier.

All of the young people I spoke to stated –

“ Everything the teachers do is for our best interest and we know they have our best interests at heart.”

“ Mrs Seaman will be there really quick if you need her!”

I recommend that Belmont Comprehensive School Community Arts College, Sensory Support Service receive Investing in Children Membership.

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