



Spotlight on Peacehaven Community School

Peacehaven Community School in East Sussex was the winner of the Secondary School of the Year Award at the 2013/14 Shine a Light Awards. The school, which provides excellent opportunities for pupils with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), impressed the judges for the second year running.

Peacehaven Community School, which has recently become a Co-operative Trust school, provides comprehensive support for their pupils with SLCN; communication is prioritised annually in the School Development Plan and funding for training is offered to staff. Last year, Ofsted judged that the SLCN facility supports students to achieve well and that students with SLCN, make better progress than other students.

Peacehaven Community School has two learning assistants with the University of Birmingham Postgraduate Certificate in speech and language difficulties, one with a University Certificate in Autism and another with a Sussex University accredited SLCN course. One learning assistant is currently taking a course in attachment. The specialist language teacher has now achieved a specialist literacy qualification to complement her skills and other staff receive ongoing training to help support students with language and communication difficulties.

Staff members monitor all students and refer them directly to the SLCN teacher if they have any concerns around speech, language or communication. Staff are then asked to complete an SLCN checklist and the specialist teacher observes the student in class. She then makes recommendations for support and arranges any required interventions.

Peacehaven School are in their third year of the I CAN *Secondary Talk* programme and are accredited to Specialist level for the Special Facility and embedded level for the school as a whole. Peacehaven was the first mainstream school to achieve the specialist level.

Peacehaven place a high emphasis on primary to secondary transition for their SLCN pupils, with SLCN primary children attending taster lessons at the school across the curriculum for one morning each week, and receive a 'buddy' from Year 10 to make them feel happy and secure.

The school works closely with parents to ensure consistent expectations and language use at home and at school. The SLCN teacher liaises not only with other teachers and parents but also with the school social worker and councillor to meet the communication needs of Looked After Children with SLCN and students with emotional and behavioural needs.





The SLCN teacher works with pupils to write 'social stories' which have has a major impact on supporting behaviour. IPADs and Social Communication lessons are used to film and play back interactions between students, making them more self-aware and mindful of their communication skills such as eye contact and personal space.

She has also had significant success in motivating students with speech difficulties through the use of singing and the termly performance, to which a range of teaching and support staff are invited, has now become a regular and popular diary event.

