



# **Mount Pleasant Primary Social Communication Resourced Provision**

Welcome to our school!

### A message from Mrs. J Blackham

It is my pleasure to introduce you to our school, and more specifically to our



Resourced Provision for children with Social Communication Difficulties. The Resourced Provision for up to 19 children was established within Mount Pleasant Primary School as part of the LEAs Local Offer. Provision at Key Stage 3 is a facility at Hurworth School. The provision complements the educational facilities available at Beaumont Hill Special School and all mainstream schools within the LEA.

The motto of our school of ‘Learn for Life’ and it is key at Mount Pleasant Primary. The specialist provision compliments our inclusive ethos. We expect excellent behaviour, kindness, respect and good manners from our children and in return we promise to give each and every one of our children an excellent education, within a small, caring school community. We understand that it can be difficult to decide whether to move your child from their local area to access more specialist provision. Therefore, we have produced this guide to answer some of the questions which you may have as a parent looking to join our school.

We hope you find this guide useful; should you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us – our details are included at the end of the guide.

Mrs. Jo Blackham

## **Why would my child access Mount Pleasant Resource d Provision?**

The majority of children accessing our resourced provision have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Decisions on placement are made by a multi professional team at a termly panel meeting. When a place in the provision is decided upon, a transition programme to introduce the child gradually is agreed by the provision staff, present school and parents. Where appropriate, assessed placements are arranged involving a set period of time where the needs of the child are assessed before a long term placement is offered.

## **How would my child get to Mount Pleasant Primary?**

Generally, our children arrive to school by taxi if they do not live within walking distance of our school. The taxis are provided by the Local Authority and are free to parents. In most instances, children from our Provision travel in groups together, in minibus style taxis. If your child were to be offered a place, the transport team will contact you to arrange travel. For reference, their contact number is detailed in 'useful contacts' should you have any questions. All taxis have an escort to ensure your child is safe and happy throughout their journey and passed to a Member of Mount Pleasant staff upon arrival.



## **WHAT IS AN AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER?**

Autistic Spectrum Disorder describes a developmental disability which affects the way a person communicates and relates to people around them. It is described as a 'spectrum' because there are a wide range of behaviours and difficulties which appear to have autistic tendencies. It can affect people across the range of intellectual ability. There is no cure for ASD, it is a life long condition and can be genetically linked. People who are diagnosed as being autistic have impairment in the three areas known as the Triad of Impairment. These are:-

### **1. Impairment of Language and Communication**

Difficulties with language and all forms of communication, including facial expression, gesture and other body language. Some of the things that will be visible in people with ASD include:

Facial expression being 'out of line' with speech.

- \* A lack of pointing to share attention.
- \* An inappropriate use of, or poor quality, eye-contact.
- \* A restricted repertoire of gestures.
- \* A lack of speech, or impaired use of speech eg. pedantic speech, odd intonation, use it out of social context.
- \* A literal interpretation of what is said.
- \* Difficulty understanding jokes/idioms/sarcasm.

## 2. Impairment of Social Interaction

Difficulties with understanding and skills needed for social interaction. This is shown in a number of ways which include:

A lack of attention to other people.

Failing to comment on or show things to others.

Not responding when addressed as a member of a group.

Behaving inappropriately to the social context.

Poor awareness of the feelings of others.

Poor awareness or incomprehension of other people's thoughts/beliefs

## 3. Impairment of Flexibility of Thought

There will be evidence of rigidity and inflexibility of thought processes, and a difficulty in producing mental images of what is not present or has not taken place. This can lead to compulsive/obsessive behaviour and a resistance to change in routine. Some of the things visible will include:

- \* A dependence on routine.
- \* Being inflexible.
- \* Resisting change.
- \* Having obsessive rituals.
- \* Being preoccupied with a limited range of interests.
- \* Poor imitation skills.
- \* A lack of, or minimal symbolic play.
- \* Difficulty with generalisation.

**All 3 impairments** need to be evident for a diagnosis to be made, but a variation in the overall severity of the difficulties and the way in which they show themselves will be apparent in each individual.

## What we will provide

Inclusion is at the heart of our entire school. We are committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for all of our children, and work hard to ensure that the needs of our pupils are met across the day.

### **In order to meet this challenge, our provision has:**

- A dedicated provision manager and SENCo to oversee the provision for all children with additional needs across the school.
- Dedicated and qualified staff in the field of ASD to directly support children across the school. All staff have completed relevant Autism Education Trust training or equivalent, with provision staff holding more advanced qualifications.
- Clear systems for developing social interaction skills taught across the curriculum, ensuring your child is always well supported and appropriately challenged.
- A level of staffing, higher than that normally available in mainstream, but not 1:1.
- A family ethos, where each child and their needs is understood by all of the school community.
- An open door policy for parents – as we recognise that children attending settings which are possibly not in a family's local area can be a daunting experience
- A headteacher fully committed to inclusion and high quality experiences for all children.



## Curriculum

A flexible approach to a broad and balanced curriculum which enables us to accommodate individual needs and allows the children to reach their potential. Criteria for accessing our provision is based on the expectation that the child can access at least 50% meaningful mainstream learning. It is expected that children will make progress towards age expected targets to the best of their ability, and sit all assessments in the same way as their peers. All staff in school are aware of ASD and the needs of these children. Children are supported by an adult when learning in mainstream classes, but when they are comfortable and confident in the environment the supporting adult will gradually withdraw where possible.

## Learning Environment

- \*A low arousal environment with structured programmes and daily routines.
- \*Work stations when required
- \*Tasks broken down into small steps.
- \*Visual support for learning.
- \*Space and time for children to cope with and calm down as necessary.
- \*Organisation and Independence
- \*Interacting and working with others.



## Social Skills

The provision offers opportunity to develop skills that require teaching beyond those not generally available in mainstream classrooms. These include:

- \*Making choices and decisions
- \*Social skills e.g.. turn taking, respecting the needs of others
- \*Appropriate behaviour
- \*Language and communication skills.

Targeted one to one intervention is delivered where necessary to children of all ages. Older children access sequences of lessons focusing on the following areas. These are then assessed against a small step assessment system named PIVATS (PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR VALUED ASSESSMENT & TARGETTED LEARNING)



## Who are the staff who work with our provision children?

The full school prospectus details all of the staff who work at Mount Pleasant however, more specifically, the 'Provision' is organised as follows:

Sharon Minikin—Provision Leader

Nicky Lupton—Deputy Provision Leader, HLTA

Marie James—Level 3 TA—KS2

Adam Swan—Level 2 TA—KS2

Sarah Betts—Level 2 TA—KS2

Amy Markham—level 2 TA—KS1/2

Tina Stein—Level 2 TA—KS1

## What involvement can we have as parents at Mount Pleasant Primary?

We very much value the contribution that parents can make to their child's education. In order for parents to be fully involved in the life of the school, when they generally do not drop off or pick up their child from school, both school and home must work hard at this important aspect of school life. You are always welcome to call in to see how your child is getting on. We stay in contact by:

- \*Home-School diaries for school and family to communicate with each other.
- \*Regular phone contact with child's 'Key Worker' if there are any issues.
- \*Termly parent meetings to discuss academic and social progress.
- \*Half termly 'tea and talk' sessions for parents to come and chat informally with each other and staff around issues pertinent to them.
- \*Review Meetings.



## Transition

The nature of Social Communication difficulties and Autistic Spectrum Disorders, means that it is very likely that once a child has a secure placement with us, they will not return to their previous school. This is because they need continued support to develop an understanding of their needs and strategies to deal with their difficulties. At the end of their time at Mount Pleasant, the children may transition into specialist provision, a secondary school with enhanced provision, or into their local mainstream comprehensive.



**Who are my main points of contact if I have any questions or worries?**

Sharon Minikin—SENDCo and Provision Leader 01325 244950

Jo. Blackham- Head of School 01325 244950

Transport Arrangements for Darlington Local Authority 01325 405000

Placements Team at Darlington Local Authority 03000 265872

Educational Psychology Department 03000 263333



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**Head of School - Jo Blackham**