

## Welcome

Welcome to the DSPL Dacorum Newsletter for professionals and parents and carers. We hope that it will give you a sense of what's going on with DSPL and special educational needs in Dacorum, and also let you know how you can get involved or be supported.

## New team members!



Vicky McKirgan joined the team in October as our Area SEND Lead. Vicky is working with schools to ensure that they can start to put in place the recommendations from the Hertfordshire County Council Autism Review which was published in 2015. These include strategies such as having a safe space for children and young people to go to when they become overwhelmed, and having a named Autism Lead who is the main contact for parents.



Ruth Mason started work in September as a specialist SEND School Family Worker, based at Kings Langley School. If you are a parent of a child with Special Educational Needs and feel you would benefit from support from one of our School Family Work teams, see the list of services and areas covered on the back page of this newsletter.

## Dacorum DSPL Conference “Now & Next”

The second Dacorum DSPL conference took place on Wednesday 19 October 2016, at the South Hill Centre.

Attended by over 100 teachers, parents, carers and local professionals working to support children and young people with SEND, it was another great opportunity to see what's on offer in the local area and talk about our future work.

The event included presentations from John Short, Hertfordshire County Council's Autism Workstream Lead about County-wide developments, and a presentation from Suzanne Stace, Head Teacher at Westfield Primary School and a parent from the school, about the reasonable adjustments that can be put in place to support children and their parents with special educational needs.

Feedback included:

**Great range of speakers including parents  
Parent speaker was especially powerful and  
informative**

100% of attendees said that the event was good or excellent. It was felt that there was less opportunity for participation than in 2015, which we'll bear in mind when planning our next event.

Photos and videos of the event are now on our website at [www.dacorumspl.org.uk](http://www.dacorumspl.org.uk)



## Small Bids

We have now allocated all funding for small bids for 2016-17. Over the past few months we have provided funding for schools to use for sensory or calm rooms, training in Protective Behaviours and Small Steps, as well as weighted blankets and rollers for The Collett Special School and items for Woodfield Special School's new café.

## Sharing Good Practice – The Collett School

In each newsletter, we will be sharing some good practice from one of our schools, which can easily be replicated in other schools in the area. If you'd like your school to be featured, please contact us.

The Collett School have been following the recommendations in the Autism review: "For every mainstream primary school to create an area which is quiet and free of distractions to which a pupil can go to work or to relax and reduce the level of social and sensory demands. This might be an area of the classroom or a specific area in the school".

They have used areas of the school imaginatively and creatively by adapting unused space to provide positive time-out spaces. One such area was originally a corridor and did not serve any other purpose. By defining the floor space using green carpet and placing parts of trees into the corridor and wooded wallpaper on one side of the wall, it has dramatically changed the appearance of the space. A specialist rocking chair with a hood was then placed in the quiet area. However a rocking chair or sensory tent would have a similar effect.

The benefit to using this space is that the child does not have far to go when upset, thereby containing the distress, and can be kept a close eye on if immediately outside the classroom. Though the review does not specify more than one quiet space, Collett School have also transferred cupboards into sensory rooms and then amalgamated the resource cupboards into the classrooms.

Within the classroom other quiet areas have been devised by making workstations more quiet and free of distractions by partitioning areas using blue display boards.



## SENCO emails – a request from Debbie Orton at Hertfordshire County Council

In order to share updates on the work of the SEND Strategy implementation programme, the future AET training programme, and changes to processes such as ENF, it would be useful if we were able to directly contact your SENCo. We discussed this at the SEND Executive meeting in September and Headteacher and parent reps were very supportive of this.

We understand that this is something you need to set up in school and would ask if you could set up an email address to 'SchSENCO@xxx' in the same way as there is a SchHead@ or a SchAdmin@ email address. I believe this will help us improve our communication with schools in the future. I would be grateful if you could do this and please send Sue Westgate, ISL Business Manager, the information when you have set it up so that she can compile a full list.

In the meantime please do share the information in this email with your SENCO and other relevant staff.

If you have any queries please contact Sue at [sue.westgate@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sue.westgate@hertfordshire.gov.uk)





## Hertfordshire Steps – new delivery model

Hertfordshire Steps is Hertfordshire County Council's preferred behaviour management approach, and DSPL8 has been funding training in Dacorum schools since January 2015.

From January 2017 there will be no training provided by external providers, and schools must identify a member of staff who will become their own in-house trainers. Training courses are taking place from January 2017 at Robertson House in Stevenage.

DSPL8 Board have agreed to continue funding Hertfordshire Steps training, but as it is more costly to train in-house trainers, further work needs to be done to agree on the exact level of funding.

We will also be hosting a 'Train the Trainer' course in Dacorum so that local schools can avoid the inconvenience of travelling to Stevenage. The course will take place on the 2nd-4th October 2017. To find out more and book your place on any Hertfordshire Steps Train the Trainer course, please email Adam Hayes on [adam.hayes@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:adam.hayes@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

## New Special School Outreach School

From January 2017, Dacorum's official Outreach School will be Woodfield Special School, taking over from the service previously provided by Colnbrook.

To download the Initial Contact Form, please visit their website [www.woodfield.herts.sch.uk](http://www.woodfield.herts.sch.uk)

Woodfield are also holding a SENCo and INCo Coffee Morning on Friday 20th January, from 9.30-11.30am, to show what they can offer.

Email [vanessa.gregory@woodfield.herts.sch.uk](mailto:vanessa.gregory@woodfield.herts.sch.uk) or [Beverley.hamilton@woodfield.herts.sch.uk](mailto:Beverley.hamilton@woodfield.herts.sch.uk) if you would like to attend.

Woodfield will continue to run their Parent Support Group on Wednesdays from 10.30-12.00, email



## Parent Support Group

**Every Wednesday  
10:30 am to 12 noon**

(Term time only)

@ The Lodge, Woodfield School

Malmes Croft, Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 8RL

Contact: [vanessa.gregory@woodfield.herts.sch.uk](mailto:vanessa.gregory@woodfield.herts.sch.uk)  
01442 253476



Do you have a child with additional needs? Need somebody to talk to?

Come and meet other parents for a coffee and a chat. Young children welcome

Whether your child is at mainstream school or a special school, You are welcome to meet other parents, talk to professionals, or simply drop in for a coffee and meet new friends who also have a child with special educational needs.

ALL WELCOME - JUST COME ALONG  
[www.woodfield.herts.sch.uk](http://www.woodfield.herts.sch.uk)

## Spectrum Basketball

Basketball on Wednesdays, 5-6pm, at Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre, St Albans

"For everyone on the Autistic Spectrum, ADHD, siblings, parents, and anyone else who wants to enjoy the social aspects of being in a team, free from the pressure to meet the social expectations of others."

The idea of a community sport coach came from a sporting dad (Jon Thorne) seeing his son with ADHD and autism traits excluded from team sports because he could not meet the expectations of a coach.

Jon spent several years developing his own coaching style with various home educating communities and the ideas behind our community coaching became CommunitySport.club. A community sports coach holds space for each individual player to create, discover and invent their own ways to play basketball... free from having to meet the expectations of others. To put it another way, the social codes designed to help people "fit in" ... that Jon feels often generate anxiety and stress in people on the autistic spectrum... are NOT present. Jon is the head coach for this session.

<http://communitysport.club/product/spectrum-basketball>

## Autism News



### Autism Education Trust training

Hertfordshire County Council will soon be rolling out training to every member of teaching staff in Hertfordshire, starting in the New Year. Training is likely to take place after school and will be booked centrally through Hertfordshire County Council. We will be working with the Council to get the word out to schools about this training.

### Classroom training from ADD-Vance

ADD-Vance trainers are able to deliver workshops to primary school classes, if one of their peers is on the autistic spectrum. Not only does this help pupils to understand the autistic responses of their class mate, but it also shows them that Autism is a difference and not a disability. If you're interested in running a session in your school, please contact Ashley, who will then put you in touch with ADD-Vance.



### Social Skills Training

Teaching staff from 30 Dacorum primary schools attended a training with Jo Whitlock, Autism Advisory Teacher, on setting up lunchtime social skills groups for children with Autism. The lunchtime groups are planned to be around one of the child's special interests, and all children who share that interest are invited to join the group. The groups provide a focused activity for the child during a normally unstructured time of the day, as well as allowing the child to develop social skills. In return for the training, schools will provide DSPL8 with a case study at the end of the summer term 2017.

Feedback from schools so far:

**“Feedback from our focus child's parents has been very positive and behaviour has definitely improved. The group has bonded very well and they all seem very pleased to be included and excited when I collect them for 'Wednesday Group' each week. We've played games to work on turn taking, acted out our emotions and tried to begin to understand how we show these emotions and looked at personal space.”**

**“Social group is working well so far. We have one target child and a classmate from her class who she likes to play with. We have also selected a couple of 'role model' children to help shape the group as we want it to go. We have been following the programme as shown in the training and giving each child a 'job' to do. We swap the jobs around and try and create situations where the target child is not in control, as we know this is one thing she likes to do and so this gives her the opportunity to 'manage' a situation that she might not like ... I think it's a really valuable intervention for her as we can push her gently out of her comfort zone in a really controlled way and in a safe environment.”**

**“The resources Jo talked us through were very helpful and it's been a simple task to pass these on to our TA Team. Further resources have been purchased and the children particularly enjoy the Lego Therapy which has proved a useful prompt to develop reciprocal conversations, promote teamwork and generally have fun.”**

**“The grouping of the children into particular roles has really helped the communication between them.”**

**“The social skills club is running brilliantly and the children are rating it 10 out of five !!! for most sessions.**

**“As the social skills club is for secondary children I have adapted lots of games and ideas from the Talkabout for Teenagers book. We have played lots of turn taking games and had a session on body language which was interesting.**

**“Next session is going to be Who am I game which will involves taking it in turns to ask questions and respecting other pupils' ideas.”**

## Autism Education Trust materials for schools, parents and carers



Hertfordshire County Council want all Hertfordshire Schools to use the Autism Education Trust self audit materials, to ensure they are following the best practice in supporting children and young people on the spectrum.

Free materials are available on the website at <http://www.aetraininghubs.org.uk/>



**Hertfordshire County Council** has been transforming the way in which it delivers services for Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND). Part of this is to make sure that the **information, advice and guidance (IAG)** about special educational needs or disability in Hertfordshire meets your needs, is clear, up to date and easy to find.

To help us do this, we would be grateful if you could spend 5-10 minutes completing a short online survey here.

<http://surveys.hertfordshire.gov.uk/s/SENDIAG/>



We look forward to hearing from you before the deadline of 31 December.

### ELKLAN Training:

NVQ level 3 Qualification in Speech and Language Support for 11-16s - starting January 2017.



DSPL8 will fund all course fees for teaching staff from DSPL8 schools.

Email [p.hickey@longdean.herts.sch.uk](mailto:p.hickey@longdean.herts.sch.uk) for more information.

### ELKLAN training for early years and primary schools:



DSPL8 will fund course fees for teaching staff from DSPL8 schools, delivered by the NHS Speech and Language team.

The team are also offering Verbal ASD courses for supporting children aged 5-11, which will also be funded by DSPL8.

Email [abigail.bude@hct.nhs.uk](mailto:abigail.bude@hct.nhs.uk) to find out dates for Spring and Summer 2017.

### Berkhamsted Support group:



#### Are you a parent of a child with ADHD/ ASD/Communication Disorder or with Sensory Processing needs?

A new daytime support group has been set up at Westfield Primary School for parents across Berkhamsted.

The group is facilitated by Lisa MacGovern (School Family Worker) with Jo Whitlock from the Communication Autism Team.

**Friday 3rd February 1.15-2.45pm**

At Westfield Primary School (Community Room), Durrants Lane, Berkhamsted, HP4 3PJ

Coffee will be available from 1.15 pm and Toddlers are welcome!

## Help, Support & Advice

### Herts Local Offer

Information about services available in your local area for parents, children and young people aged 0-25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

[directory.hertsdirect.org/kb5/hertfordshire/directory/localoffer.page](http://directory.hertsdirect.org/kb5/hertfordshire/directory/localoffer.page)



### Hertfordshire Additional Needs Database

You are entitled to join HAND if you are the parent or carer of a child or young person with an additional need or disability aged 0-19. Benefits of joining include a leisure concession card, and subscription to the HAND newsletter. [directory.hertsdirect.org/kb5/hertfordshire/directory/service.page?id=W-oM7uWKTro&familychannel=4](http://directory.hertsdirect.org/kb5/hertfordshire/directory/service.page?id=W-oM7uWKTro&familychannel=4)

For a list of local support groups and voluntary organisations click here

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/docs/pdf/v/volorgs.pdf>

### Dacorum School Family Worker Services

Dacorum has three School Family Services teams, who support families of children attending Dacorum Schools. Advice and support is available on a range of issues, including supporting families of children with additional needs. School Family Workers can also help with the facilitation of Education, Health and Care Plans. The teams also run parenting courses and advice sessions, for example with specialists in special educational needs.

**Dacorum Family Services** [www.dacorumfamilyservices.org.uk](http://www.dacorumfamilyservices.org.uk)

**Gade Schools Family Support** [www.gadeschoolsfamilysupport.co.uk](http://www.gadeschoolsfamilysupport.co.uk)

**Kings Langley Partnership of Schools** 01923 271744

### Hertfordshire SEND Information, Advice & Support Service (SENDIASS)

Formerly known as Parent Partnership Service, SENDIASS is an impartial information, advice and support service funded by Hertfordshire County Council for parents, carers, young people (0-25) and professionals. Phone 01992 555847 or email [sendiass@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sendiass@hertfordshire.gov.uk).

Find out more at <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/healthsoc/childfam/specialneeds/educ/parpart/>



### The KIDS East and West HUBs 01923 676549

The KIDS HUB offers information and support for parents and carers of disabled children / children with additional needs. aged 0-19 in Hertfordshire. KIDS Hub directory of SEND services has also now been published—take a look at what's going on in your area. [www.kids.org.uk/hub](http://www.kids.org.uk/hub)



### HARC (Hertfordshire Branch of the NAS)

Supporting families and people living with autism

<http://nasherts.org.uk/>



harc – the Hertfordshire branch of the National Autistic Society



### DSPL - How can I get involved?

There are a number of ways in which parents can get involved in services. Herts Parent Carer Involvement is a forum for parents to get more involved in the shaping and improving of services for children with additional needs. For more information contact your local network at [chair@hertsparentcarers.org](mailto:chair@hertsparentcarers.org) or visit [www.hertsparentcarers.org.uk](http://www.hertsparentcarers.org.uk)



### The DSPL Dacorum Team

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