

Case study of local good practice in identifying young people with SLCN

Ravenscliffe High School and Sports College

Halifax

Co-occurring difficulties

Although the majority of students at Ravenscliffe have learning and physical difficulties identified as their primary need on their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), as many as 69% have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) identified as a secondary need. These needs present in a range of forms including difficulty understanding, producing speech and/or language, and understanding social rules. A total communication approach is therefore used throughout the school and sixth form, encompassing pictures and symbols alongside speech, signing gesture and environmental cues. In addition, some students use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC).

Communicating about communication

Ravenscliffe puts measures in place to ensure that knowledge of students' speech, language and communication needs are obtained and passed on, particularly at key times such as phase transitions. For example, when students

enter sixth form the school provides a comprehensive transition package to get a good understanding of students' communication in different situations and environments. This is a particular priority for those who do not have detailed written information about their communication.

A school full of specialists

The staff at Ravenscliffe are trained to identify difficulties with speech, language and communication and a strong emphasis is placed on getting to know students. They hold regular in-house training on communication, including specialist approaches such as signing, intensive interaction and modelling strategies. One member of staff has also completed a post-graduate qualification in AAC and assistive technology. Communication champions are situated in each pastoral base and every morning they have a lesson focusing on core skills. The school's speech and language therapist (SLT) runs joint sessions with other staff, with a strong emphasis on functional skills.

Introduction

Ravenscliffe is a special school for students with a broad range of special educational needs. It has around 170 students, with 60 attending the post-16 provision. Students in the sixth form attend off-site work placements with local employers. Ravenscliffe was rated as outstanding in their most recent Ofsted report.



Embedded assessment

All students' speech, language and communication skills are assessed regularly as part of their overall learning using the school's own progression scale. This allows them to see clearly where a student may need support. Both staff and parents are able to request a more in-depth assessment if they feel it would benefit the student to know more about their needs and how to support them. For students with more complex needs, including those with AAC, Ravenscliffe use a team approach involving teachers, the AAC lead, SLTs and Occupational Therapy. For students who use AAC, the school uses the CODES progress monitoring framework to support identification and tracking.



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