







Richard Epps:
Lansdowne Academy
Tilbury

Meeting the needs of autistic pupils
in a mainstream setting

Lansdowne Academy

-  Tilbury is a community with high levels of deprivation
-  Large school catering for 730 pupils
-  School with a long history of underperformance
-  May 2011; Notice to improve
-  April 2012; Conversion to Academy
-  January 2013; Ofsted removes from all categories of concern after just 9 months as Academy

Resourced provision

-  Originally LA MLD provision for 12 pupils
-  Changing LA demography meant demand for MLD reduced
-  My appointment: background in SEN; particularly sensory, autism and EBD in 2011
-  LA approach school to re-designate as;

“Resourced Provision for Social Communication”

Our staffing

Principal / head of provision: Richard Epps

Teacher in charge: Jo George

Specialist trained support staff x 2



Additional non specialist support: up to 2 fte

(Educational psychologist, speech / occupational therapy,
specialist advice from Thurrock LA)

How do we work?

- ❏ Provision caters for pupils 4 – 11 on the autistic spectrum who are able or will potentially be able to access a mainstream setting
- ❏ Closely linked to Treetops Special School to align offer and access specialist support
- ❏ Pupils referred through LA panel
- ❏ Two main lines of referral:
 1. Late diagnosis failing to thrive in mainstream setting
 2. Early identification through portage etc at pre-school, entering at 4+

How do we work?

-  Provision uses TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children) techniques to provide a structured learning environment that systematically develops social and communication skills in tandem
-  Our senior staff are trained in the SCERTS approach to support systematic recording of progress and carefully defining steps in learning and social development.

What is SCERTS?

The acronym “SCERTS” refers to the focus on:

- ❏ **“SC” - Social Communication** – the development of spontaneous, functional communication, emotional expression, and secure and trusting relationships with children and adults;
- ❏ **“ER” - Emotional Regulation** - the development of the ability to maintain a well-regulated emotional state to cope with everyday stress, and to be most available for learning and interacting;
- ❏ **“TS” – Transactional Support** – the development and implementation of supports to help partners respond to the child’s needs and interests, modify and adapt the environment, and provide tools to enhance learning (e.g., picture communication, written schedules, and sensory supports). Specific plans are also developed to provide educational and emotional support to families, and to foster teamwork among professionals.

Our day

8.50	Taxis and social communication
9.10	Assembly / small group interaction
9.30	Integrated in class / small group support
10.30	Break / guided play
10.45	Integrated in class / small group support
12.00	Lunch with peers / classmates
1.00	Integrated in class / small group support
2.30	Group activities: base
3.15	Taxis

(PE supported in class, swimming Wednesday)

Training

☒ Principal: TEACCH qualification from University of North Carolina

☒ Teacher in charge: currently studying for diploma at Birmingham University

(both have certified SCERTs training)



☒ Other Base staff and class teachers; three days training on Saturdays from Autism Education Trust

☒ All staff; termly update staff meetings

☒ Governors: regular briefings from principal

(10 staff have Team Teach teaching with authority to retrain)

Using and disseminating the AET materials

-  December 2012: Training for all non specialist staff in school to introduce the National Autism Standards Competency Framework
-  Support staff trained at session on identifying four key areas of difference:

SOCIAL
COMMUNICATION

INTERESTS
AND
INFORMATION
PROCESSING



SOCIAL
UNDERSTANDING

SENSORY
PROCESSING

Easy staff summary; SPELL!

S Structure





P Positivity

E Empathy





L Learning environments

L Linking Environments




Next steps 1

-  Simplified training cascaded to all staff to raise awareness
-  All staff in direct contact with base pupils undertaken Competency audit to identify areas to develop expertise and understanding
-  Whole school competency audit undertaken, showing school well placed to deliver to autistic pupils
-  Ofsted judge provision “good”

Next steps 2

-  Staff very motivated by training so -----
-  Two days Level 3 training brokered for March
-  Mainstream staff requesting more training and fully embraced the framework
-  Further training for parents

Outcomes

-  Clearer purpose in base
-  Greater understanding by all staff of needs of autistic pupils
-  Staff all wanting further training

---the learning journey continues