

A group of students are sitting in a line in a school hall, each playing a djembe drum. They are all smiling and appear to be enjoying the activity. In the background, there is a large blue banner with the text 'Inspire the child' and 'Discover your future, Empower the community.' The hall has large windows on the right side.

Cleaswell Hill School

Headteacher's Report to Governors

*Inspire the child,
Discover your future,
Empower the community.*

Cleaswell Hill School
School Avenue
Tel: 01670 823182

Forged in Fire

The heart of man, his body and his brain, are forged in a white-hot furnace for the purpose of conflict (the struggle of creation), and with that conflict removed, man is a sword cutting daisies

Tennessee Williams



I heard this Tennessee Williams quote the other day on a podcast which discussed the lack of resilience and the blame/excuse culture in modern society. It got me thinking about why this isn't the norm at Cleaswell Hill School...

It's now five years since the Covid furnace ignited—the catalyst that led to the forging of our Five-Year Plan. We find ourselves at its midpoint (more or less), though pinpointing its exact beginning is tricky; some areas were already in motion, while others took time to ignite.

Since March 2020, the SENDlandscape has shifted dramatically. During the pandemic, I naively assumed that running a special school post-Covid would be simpler. Little did I know we would be tempered by challenge—grappling with the SEN crisis, dwindling funding (in real terms), rising complexity of need, soaring pupil numbers and an unprecedented demand for places. Simply keeping the fire burning—let alone strengthening our provision—has been no small feat. What once felt like an ambitious yet achievable challenge now resembles an uphill marathon. Yet, despite these mounting complexities, the goals of our plan are taking shape.

The Role of Outreach

Outreach remains a central element of the plan. With SEND pupil numbers climbing while birth rates fall, mainstream schools must adapt their provision—not as an option, but as a necessity. We've already supported many schools, both special and main-

stream, and I suspect our broad training offer will only become more sought after in the years ahead.

Reconnecting with the Classroom

This spring, I set myself the challenge of spending time in every class across the school. As we've grown, I've inevitably become more removed from the 'coal face,' and this was my way of reconnecting. It's been an immensely rewarding experience (at least for me the staff may feel differently!), offering a firsthand look at the outstanding practice happening every day. The sheer range of needs and abilities across our school is staggering; the way our phase leaders and class teams rise to meet challenges—through careful planning, creativity and sheer hard work—is nothing short of impressive.



Forging the Future

This brings us to another challenge—ambition grows where skill thrives. We are rich in talent, with a strong and deep team, many of whom are eager to take on new opportunities and progress their careers. The question is: how do we create space for growth while keeping our structure strong?

Over the next six months, I'll be reviewing our structure to ensure it supports the next phase of our evolution. Sustainability and succession planning will be at the heart of this process. Our work isn't just about the present—it's about building something that lasts.

One thing's for certain: there's no risk of us cutting daisies anytime soon.

Mike Jackson, March 25

Section 1 - School Development

Whole School Targets (WSTs)

Our whole school targets for 2024-25 are:

Quality of Education

Setting the highest professional standards of effective performance and provision so that every child is experiencing excellence every day.

Continued investment in professional development and learning advances staff skills, promoting outstanding pedagogy and learning.

Behaviour and Attitudes

A school culture of consistent, positive adult behaviour creates safety for learners through a shared understanding of relational approaches.

Personal Development

Equality of opportunity between children is prioritised, equality is advanced and no child is adversely impacted by a protected characteristic.

New and enriching learning experiences across school provision result from the implementation of the Enrichment Passport Programme

Leadership and Management

Improved pupil outcomes result from continuous school development, staff career progression and strategic succession planning driven by the Five Year Strategy.



Ofsted

'Cleaswell Hill School remains an outstanding school'. We have no identified area for development.

School Improvement Partner (SIP)

Lynn Watson , SIP, was in school on the 12th March for the spring term SIP visit which focussed on our Engagement and Engagement+ provision. Lynn's report will be circulated prior to the full governing meeting.

Section 2 - Curriculum

Curriculum

Recent revisions to the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) stress the importance of curriculum depth and leadership in addressing inequalities.

Quality assurance involves the systematic review of educational provision to maintain and improve quality, equity and efficiency. It encompasses school self-evaluation, external evaluation (including inspection), the evaluation of teachers and school leaders, and learner assessment outcomes to maintain high educational standards.

Curriculum design & development is an iterative process and an extensive review of the curriculum began in March 2023. Much work has taken place since then to ensure a responsive curriculum and we continue to refine this.

Governors prioritise keeping curriculum reviews current and supporting school leaders in maintaining high educational standards.

Priorities for Spring 2025:

- Ensure links extend between the main site and Appleby Centre – maths moderation highlighted the need for early exposure to KS3 content; English texts needed consideration. Conversations have taken place and the English Long-Term Scheme of Work updated to reflect this
- Options- cohesion & sequence for Phases 4 & 5. Conversations and necessary changes being made
- Engagement Pathway- meeting the needs of a changing cohort of pupils with complex learning needs and uneven profiles. Discussions linked to; working with external partners; decisions for, and managing of, part time timetables; looking

at appropriate learning spaces; revisiting evidence-based strategies and approaches to teaching, learning and assessment; skill-based tools; extending green scale activities

- Core Pathway Curriculum - under review as data is highlighting current and future pupil cohort are developmentally younger than previous cohorts. Subject specific learning, delivered in discrete subject lessons, is no longer meeting need for all. Leads considering holistic needs of pupils, curriculum content and appropriate pedagogy
- Inclusive learning opportunities incorporating therapy within the curriculum and close liaison between the therapy and education teams to continue to plan for and facilitate this
- Re-organisation into Junior Engagement, Core and Extended Pathways is supporting connected, sequenced learning through school. Next steps to consider organisation of Senior Phases
- Curriculum rationales being updated for all pathways
- Music- School are compliant with the DfE statutory requirement for a Music Development Plan on school websites. Positive links have been made with Music Partnership North who are delivering weekly djembe drum sessions, have facilitated a day of 'wandering musicians', loaned percussion instruments and delivered staff training. A Long Term Scheme of Work and Teacher Knowledge Organisers are in place
- Food & Nutrition- Removed from the Design and Technology Curriculum to accurately reflect the focus we have on Food and Nutrition across school. Updated Graduated Response includes universal offer, targeted school support and higher support from external partners and incorporates School Food Standards. Graduated Response also includes how school supports pupils with Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Diet (ARFID) Parent/Carer Ping survey informs awareness of pupils with ARFID for directing support. The Food and Nutrition Lead is a School Champion with NHS Feeding Programmes and links with NHS SaLT have been developed. Observation of lunchtimes with feedback shared; increase in family-style mealtimes in class bases rather than the hall. Links with local universities to pilot project FEAST: **F**ood and **E**ating Environments in **A**lternative Education and Special Schools **Study**. Magic Breakfast provided daily. Work is ongoing regarding how best to include food, nutrition and healthy living within thera-

peutic activities for daily life as functional transferable skill development alongside evidencing where it fits within the current curriculum subjects (PSHEE, Science, PfA, PE)

- PE- Co-Lead identified. OT and Pathway Lead supporting the design and development of an inclusive curriculum that encourages physical activity for all through school
- PSHEE- Leads continue to adapt and design a responsive curriculum offer- see safeguarding in the curriculum section below.

Karyn McMahon

Professional Learning and Development- Achieving Exceptional Practice

Last term, our Professional Development and Learning Programme was shared in the Head Teachers Report along with the principles of exceptional SEND pedagogy which we have identified. Staff continue to prioritise their learning, remaining curious and reflective practitioners supported by school leaders to achieve excellence in their daily practice.

A recent training session, delivered by the Lead Practitioners of Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (QTVI) from Northumberland Inclusive Education Services- Sensory Support Service, was well received.

We continue to deliver training for colleagues, both in school and for external partners, following the Autism Education Trust Programme.

Teachers/Class Leads will be participating in Ed North's Teach Meet on Adaptive Teaching in March.

Our extensive training programme with the University of Northumbria to gain Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) status continues, with 3 more colleagues completing this in the Spring Term.

Many staff are completing external training programmes for example, National Professional Qualifications (NPQ) and University courses in a range of areas developing their knowledge and skills. These include:

- 4 teachers completing NPQ evidence-based training programmes to further develop their expertise of SEND leadership
- 5 Teaching Assistants are in their final year of a BA (Hons) Working with Children and Families with the University of Cumbria

- 1 colleague is completing a certificate for coaches in Trauma-informed Practice
- 1 colleague has completed Level 3 certificate for Forest School Leader along with Forest School Paediatric First Aid, and another colleague starts this in March
- 1 colleague completed Level 3 trainer Elklan Speech & Language Support for pupils with SEND and Nuffield Early language Intervention (NELI)
- 1 colleague completed Level 6 Diploma in Careers Guidance and Development
- 1 colleague completing Comptia Network+



An increase in new staff working within the Engagement Pathway has led to essential skills and knowledge being revisited, for example Jabadeo, Intensive Interaction, Tac Pac and Attention Autism. This is in addition to new vehicles for learning including the So Safe (PSHEE) programme.

Taking part in visits to other schools, pilot projects with universities, attending educational groups, conferences, webinars and podcasts supports individual and team skill development. Learning is shared with the wider team as appropriate.

All Teachers and Class Leads continue as researchers investigating strategies and practices that foster student independence and self-regulation through class-based action research projects alongside the University of Northumbria.

We are compliant with safeguarding and child protection training. Two school

leaders have just refreshed their Safer Recruitment training. Our Safeguarding Consultants, Clennell Education Solutions are working with the Designated Safeguarding Lead on a review of record keeping. A colleague from Northumberland Social Care Team is delivering a session for staff working with Care Experienced Children. Sessions continue for staff on wellbeing delivered by providers from NHS Be You and being implemented across school by Julie Brown, Wellbeing Champion.

Staff have completed Food Hygiene Level 1, Manual Handling, and Display Screen Equipment training as needed. Data Protection training is being delivered by the Local Authority, NAPPI training and with Emergency First Aid at work training are booked for April.

Karyn McMahon

Targeted Support Spring 2025 – Academic Interventions

During the summer term we successfully delivered 6 different academic interventions, offering 24 places to a total of 14 pupils. These interventions were delivered via our in-house intervention TA in the therapy cabin.

Interventions were delivered individually to children with each receiving between 2 and 4 sessions per week.

The data shows that during the autumn term, 86% of children made progress using the ELS phonics tracker data and in school assessment data. 2 children did not make progress; one has stopped medication which is having an impact upon concentration and one had low levels of attendance.

Throughout this term, we are successfully delivering 6 academic interventions, over and above the excellent provision already available at Cleaswell. These interventions are to be delivered via Gillian, our ELS/intervention teaching assistant. All interventions are chosen for their evidence-based effectiveness in improving outcomes for learners. We are incredibly proud to be offering 20 intervention places this term to 10 pupils.

Pupils identified for interventions this term have been chosen based on assessment data. Any child not making progress within the term is identified by staff, staff perform a deep dive into why and decide if an intervention is needed and in which area of the curriculum. Intervention requests are submitted. I then have discussions with staff and identify which intervention the child needs and a place is allocated accordingly.

Helen Moulton

Phonics

Phonics continues to be high profile in school. Lessons are modelled regularly to staff; staff have the opportunity to observe or have sessions modelled to them in their classes. Staff from 'Castle School' have observed both phonics and spelling sessions throughout the Autumn term to support with their professional development and improve the phonic/spelling provision for children in their setting.

I continue to deliver training externally to schools and EVOLVE days which include lesson observations, analysis of data and targets for the SLT to implement in their schools as well as whole school initial training. Phase 1 ELS has started to be implemented in 2 classes in school and is successfully being planned and delivered. We are currently in the process of purchasing Essential spelling and word knowledge year 3-6 to implement with children who have completed ELS spelling (year 2).



Assessment

Assessment has continued to take place in the 5th week of the second half term and staff are confident to accurately use the data to 'fill in' any gaps in learning before a holiday. The data has been used to support teachers with planning and ensure learning has continued at a good pace. The data has successfully been used to identify children for additional interventions including: GPC, oral blending or blending. Out of the 60 children who were accessing phonics daily, 60 children made progress in GPCs and 59 in blending. The one child who did not make progress in blending is accessing a blending intervention in the Spring term. Out of the 36 children who accessed the spelling programme, 35 children made progress.

Currently 76 children in school are accessing the ELS phonics programme and 41 access the ELS spelling programme.

Helen Moulton

ECTs

Cleaswell Hill School offers an excellent Early Career Teaching (ECT) programme evidenced through observations, conversations with the School Improvement Partner and quality assurance visits from the appropriate body 'The Three Rivers'. We are building a resilient teacher workforce who deliver outstanding teaching and learning whilst supporting teachers through mentorship, modelling and appropriate target setting to improve their practice and support their mental health and well-being. We maximise teacher impact to ensure skilled teachers can have an outsized impact on pupil outcomes.

'DfE data has shown that 11.3% of new entrants had left the profession after just one year, and by three years, almost a quarter of new teachers had left' (DfE, 2024).

Over the past 3 years, 4 teachers have completed their two year ECT period with us and have continued to be strong, empowered teachers who Cleaswell Hill have retained successfully in their roles. We currently have 7 ECT (4 first years and 3 second years) working at Cleaswell.

As leaders in school, we create a culture where teachers feel valued and motivated whilst promoting and modelling healthy work practices and supporting their professional development. We endeavour to create a work environment that supports teachers' professional growth and well-being.

Mentoring is a critical component in career development and Cleaswell Hill have recognised mentoring as a career path in its own right. Each ECT has ½ a day a week with their mentor who models lessons in their classroom and undertakes an observation. Additionally, ECTs receive a weekly mentor session where we discuss and set targets, support with paperwork, planning, assessment etc. This term we have also began to provide after school training in a range of areas which are not covered in the ECT programme e.g. how to write L.O and S.C, EHCP writing and Evolve support.

We are incredibly proud of the work we do with the incredible ECTs both past and present at Cleaswell. The ECTs have opportunities to experience a range of approaches and are encouraged to take informed risk, which grows their capacity, confidence and effectiveness.

'ECTs are mentored by a highly successful leader who models exceptional outcomes

and builds reflective practice through mentoring and coaching' (Lynn Watson (SIP 2024)).

The commitment to supporting ECTs through mentoring, observations, and targeted support is integral to our mission of providing high-quality education. By investing in the development of our early career teachers, we are fostering a culture of continuous improvement and excellence in education.

Helen Moulton, Abdah Ali

Section 3- Staffing and Finance

Pupil Statistics

SIMS Analysis (Reg x Gender) Numbers represent: Count				SIMS Analysis (Year x Gender) Numbers represent: Count			
	F	M	Total		F	M	Total
Engagement - Dove	1	3	4	Year R	1	2	3
Engagement - Starling	0	7	7	Year 1	2	4	6
Phase 1 - Blossom	1	6	7	Year 2	2	5	7
Phase 1 - Juniper	2	7	9	Year 3	6	11	17
Phase 1 - Oak	2	3	5	Year 4	5	14	19
Phase 1 - Willow	4	3	7	Year 5	6	11	17
Phase 2 - Coquet	0	6	6	Year 6	6	17	23
Phase 2 - Rede	3	6	9	Year 7	10	31	41
Phase 2 - Tweed	4	7	11	Year 8	7	22	29
Phase 2 - Tyne	5	5	10	Year 9	4	27	31
Phase 2 - Wansbeck	3	4	7	Year 10	9	19	28
Phase 3 - Belsay	5	8	13	Year 11	2	14	16
Phase 3 - Cragside	2	10	12	Year 12	6	6	12
Phase 3 - Lindisfarne	3	9	12	Year 13	1	1	2
Phase 3 - Warkworth	2	7	9	Total	67	184	251
Phase 4 - Deer	0	14	14				
Phase 4 - Fox	2	9	11				
Phase 4 - Otter	5	9	14				
Phase 4 - Red Squirrel	3	7	10				
Phase 5 - Alnmouth	1	9	10				
Phase 5 - Amble	7	3	10				
Phase 5 - Beadnell	3	5	8				
Phase 5 - Boulmer	1	6	7				
Phase 5AC - Montane	2	12	14				
Phase 5AC - Phoenix	4	12	16				
Phase 5AC - Riverside	2	7	9				
Total	67	184	251				
Sixth Form							
Information Only	7	7	14				

Staffing

So far, during the spring term, we have employed 5 teaching assistants (1 fixed term and 2 casual)

We currently have 174 staffing contracts, including 5 fixed terms and 12 casual.

Staff absence for the spring term, up to 4th March, was as follows:

- Class leads - 18 sick days
- Support Staff – 255 sick days & 96 days other reasons.

Covering staff absence is difficult, but we have managed to build up a small bank of casual staff which we use as well as supply agencies.

Julie Brown

Premises Update



ID Construction & Joinery completed the installation of a kitchenette for the Learning Cabin at February half-term. This facility provides the two classes in that building with a place to practise essential life skills.

We have purchased a 9-seater Ford Transit Custom following a satisfactory pre-purchase inspection by the AA. This can be driven on a car licence. The hope is that we can get another later in the year to replace our 18 year old minibus.

Following the success of the three converted containers on our main yard, we have ordered a fourth from Portable Space which will be delivered in the Easter holidays and available to use by the therapy and interventions teams shortly after.



After a long wait, Hutchinson Environmental Solutions will be installing a fit-for-purpose commercial pumping station for our OLC building in the Easter holidays. This will solve the problems with the current sewage pump.

In February we had an inspection by NCC Corporate Health & Safety (the previous one was in 2014). While we have not yet received the formal inspection report, we are pleased to inform you that the visit went well with no concerns or significant recommendations for improvement.

Jordan Tolley

Budget Overview

The Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) was completed, circulated to the full governing body and submitted to Northumberland County Council on 20th January 2025.

The budget for the 2025-2026 financial year will be set with the school accountant from Northumberland County Council in March 2025. The Service Level Agreements (SLAs) provided via Northumberland County Council have been ordered for the 2025-2026 financial year in preparation for the budget meeting. Following the meeting, the budget will be approved by the resource management committee and a summary circulated to the full governing body.

The NJC have submitted a pay claim for support staff members for 2025-2026 featuring an increase of at least £3,000 across all NJC spinal column points, a clear plan to reach a minimum pay rate of £15 an hour, an extra day of annual leave for all staff, a reduction in the working week by two hours with no loss of pay and the ability for school staff to take at least one day of their annual leave during term time with no loss of pay. If accepted, the payment would be pro-rata'd for term time only employees and apply from April 2025. The final support staff pay award for 2024-2025 was £1,290 per annum for points 2-43 and an increase of 2.5% for pay points 44 and above. The final pay award for support staff for 2023-2024 was £1,925 for points 1-43 and an increase of 3.88% for pay points 44 and above.

The Department for Education has published its pay award recommendations to the School Teacher's Review Body; the government have determined a 2.8% pay increase for teachers would be appropriate. The teacher pay award for 2024-2025 was 5.5% and teacher pay increased by 6.5% for 2023-2024. If accepted, the payment would apply from September 2025.

The current Cleaswell Hill School staffing structure was recently reviewed by the resource management committee.

The DfE financial benchmarking tool has generated a report that compares

Cleaswell Hill School's expenditure with twenty nine other similar schools for the 2023-2024 financial year; this was analysed by the resource management committee and a copy of the report has been circulated with the additional papers for the spring term full governing body meeting.

The school continues to maintain a contracts log featuring information such as contract name, service, costs, length, payment date and financial information. This provides staff members and Governors with greater clarity regarding the school's spending on contracts and aids the budget setting process. The contracts log was analysed by the resource management committee and a copy has been circulated with the additional papers for the spring term full governing body meeting.

A recent school report summary sheet and budget summary sheet have been circulated with the additional papers for the spring term full governing body meeting.

Lauren Caisley



Fundraising

Following the last report to governors, Cleaswell Hill Foundation (registered charity number 1000697) has continued to initiate and promote fundraising opportunities whilst developing strong links with parents, carers, pupils, staff and members of the local community.

Cleaswell Hill School pupils were delighted to attend a performance of Aladdin by M&M Productions in the school hall on the 5th of November as a result of generous donations from Happy Days Children's Charity (registered charity number 1010943) and Cleaswell Hill Foundation. Oak Class hosted a bake sale in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation on the 7th of November and raised £61.90 towards lots of new toys.

Cleaswell Hill School staff and pupils participated in a non-uniform day and domino card on the 8th of November to raise £66.00 in aid of the Samaritan's Purse International (registered charity number 1001349) 'Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Appeal'; lots of fantastic filled shoeboxes were produced as a result of donations of items from Cleaswell Hill School parents, carers, staff, pupils and members of the local community. Cleaswell Hill School pupils thoroughly enjoyed a visit from Pudsey Bear, supported by Ashington Asda on the 12th of November. A non-uniform day on the 15th of November and raised £117.35 in aid of BBC Children in Need (registered charity number 802052). The Cleaswell Hill School pupils that attend the water skills after school club organised a sponsored swim in aid of BBC Children in Need raised an amazing £215.00. Belsay Class participated in a five mile sponsored walk from Whitley Bay to Blyth Beach on the 26th of November and raised a phenomenal £594.00 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation to fund enrichment opportunities. Cleaswell Hill Foundation gratefully received a donation of £1,115.00 from the Co-op Local Community Fund towards horticulture equipment and resources during this month. Tyne Class hosted a bake sale on the 29th of November and raised £103.70 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation to be utilised towards a class bowling trip. Phase 3 held a non-uniform day on the 29th of November and generated £23.90 to spend on items at the shops for the local food bank.



The Scholastic book fair visited the Cleaswell Hill School main site from the 2nd – 6th of December and provided lots of lovely new books for our school library. The Christmas fair held at The Appleby Centre by pupils and staff members on the 3rd of December



raised a fantastic £746.35 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation (registered charity number 1000697). Pupils from Phases 1 and 2 thoroughly enjoyed attending a 'Christmas Extravaganza' with their parents and carers on the 10th of December and generated £311.00 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation. Amble and Almouth Classes held a Christmas coffee afternoon for parents and carers on the 12th of December and raised an amazing £329.40 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation to fund enrichment opportunities. The Cleaswell Hill School Christmas performances at East Bedlington Community Centre/Platform 1 on the 10th and 12th of December were a phenomenal success and generated £1,361.90 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation to be utilised towards performing arts resources and experiences. Santa and his sleigh kindly visited Cleaswell Hill School with The Morpeth Lions on the 19th of December and generously provided a selection box for all pupils. A non-uniform day on the 20th of December raised £54.63 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation and a donation of £185.10 was gratefully received from the sale of school photographs to parents and carers. £42.50 was generated via sales of Christmas cards designed by Cleaswell Hill School pupils this month. Cleaswell Hill Foundation appreciated very kind donations of £1,000 from T James Haulage Ltd, £100 from Mr Berg, £250 from The Cherry Tree, £1,069 from Lowes Financial Management and £500 from The Bank of Scotland Foundation matched giving scheme during the month of December.

Cleaswell Hill School staff and pupils celebrated NSPCC Number Day on the 7th of February and raised £57.10 in aid of NSPCC (registered charity number 216401). A non-uniform day on the 21st of February raised £55.00 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation.

Our links with Just Giving, Music Magpie, Your School Lottery, Empties Please, Stikins, Paypal Giving, Easy Fundraising, our onsite clothing bank and local community col-

lection boxes continue to generate essential funds for our charity.

Our local community collection box at the Cherry Tree Bar and Grill raised £209.53, our school clothes recycling bank generated £15.30, our link with Empties Please ink cartridge recycling raised £18.00, our partnership with Stikins generated £79.75, our link with Easyfundraising raised £310.33 and our lottery generated £629.80 from November 2024 – February 2025.

Two new grant applications have been submitted following the last report to governors.

The accounts, amended constitution, amended policies and trustee report for 2023-2024 were presented and ratified at the Cleaswell Hill Foundation annual general meeting on the 14th of February.

Our future planned fundraising events for this term include a non-uniform day on the 21st of March in aid of Comic Relief (registered charity number 326568) and a non-uniform day on the 11th of April in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation.

Thank you for your ongoing support,

Lauren Caisley



Section 4 - Specific Issues

Safeguarding in the Curriculum

Safeguarding responsibilities remain at the fore of school policies, procedures and practice. Link Governors ensure policies align with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024. This includes confirming that all staff training is completed and conducting thorough reviews of safeguarding audits to pinpoint areas needing improvement. We continue to follow our 3 C's monitoring schedule across each academic year: safeguarding compliance; safeguarding in the curriculum, and contextual safe-

guarding.

Studies have shown that children with SEND are 3.8 times more likely to be neglected or physically abused, 3.1 times more likely to be sexually abused and 3.9 times more likely to be emotionally abused. Findings show that 31% of children with SEND suffer abuse compared with 9% of the rest of the population. In order to get help when they fear or experience abuse, we recognise and understand that children with SEND have significant additional barriers to overcome in comparison their peers.

At Cleaswell Hill School, a culture of safeguarding is embedded within everything we do. A great importance is placed on identifying wider opportunities for children to learn about safeguarding through our broad and balanced curriculum. Our curriculum provides the opportunity for all pupils to experience life in all its diversity, to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills that significantly impact personal development, behaviour and welfare and equips children with the knowledge and skills required for personal safeguarding.

Our PSHEE curriculum underpins this and covers areas of safeguarding delivered at the correct chronological stage adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils and their developmental level.

A Link Governor monitoring visit took place on Tuesday 4 March with the PSHEE Curriculum Leads and Designated Safeguarding Lead. This useful discussion highlighted the challenges associated with effectively informing and supporting our pupils' safety given their vulnerabilities within a rapidly and ever-changing landscape. The team's next steps are to carry out a parental consultation to capture awareness and concerns linked to emerging priorities, including AI distorted imagery and sextortion, social media and contested ideologies, some from proscribed extreme organisations. This can be a confusing space and how teachers deliver key aspects and ensure a bank of accessible resources is under constant consideration.

We continue to respond quickly to support pupils when we become aware that they are making unsafe online choices outside of school time and work with families to ameliorate issues. Although the most effective approach remains to treat online safety as a whole school community issue, with educational messages embedded across computing/ICT, PSHEE and SRE, as well as touching on online safety issues across the curriculum whenever and wherever children are using technology. We continue to add information, advice and guidance regarding online safety and digital literacy to the school website and social media sites for parents.

Practical safeguarding opportunities are planned into the curriculum for all Phases/ Pathways. For example:

- Road Safety - Independent Travel Training and road safety workshops (delivered by Local Authority Independent Travel Trainers for students at The Appleby Centre)



- Water Safety visits to RNLI Newbiggin
- Fire Awareness training, including visits from the local fire service
- Street First Aid delivered to all pupils at The Appleby Centre by St. John's Ambulance
- Visits to school from external professionals including North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) paramedics
- Northumbria Police School Safeguarding Liaison Officer provides frequent bespoke sessions on, for example, malicious communication, domestic violence, harassment and stalking
- Visitors from charitable organisations including the NSPCC who visit and deliver assemblies or train staff to deliver, for example, the Speak Out Stay Safe Programme
- Visits to and from religious groups
- Links with NHS for 14+ health checks and design of posters for students with SEND
- Person Centred Planning with Northumberland County Council
- Sessions delivered by Department for Work & Pensions focusing on the world of work

We continue to develop an open and safe learning environment in which pupils express their views, seek help and help others, which is underpinned by our school val-

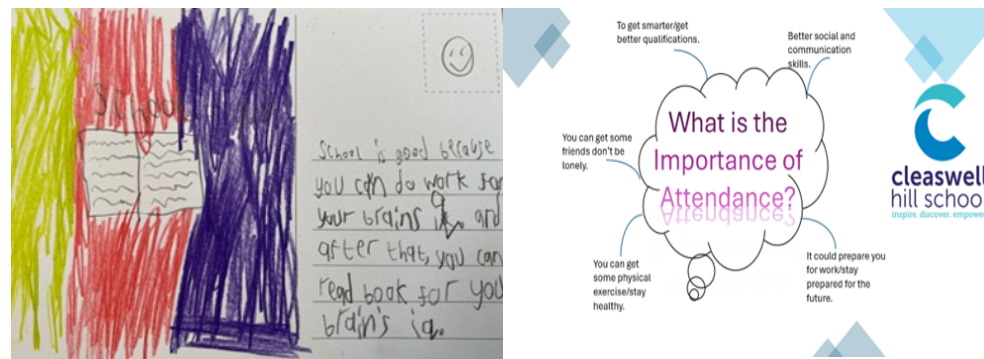
ues.

Our children learn not to tolerate any prejudiced behaviour through our positive approaches and relational practice supported by the Cleaswell Hill Code, 'Ready Respectful, Safe'.

Teachers know that the curriculum offer is a protective factor for pupils. Protecting children through developing their awareness and understanding of how to keep safe through teaching and learning aims to build appropriate layers and structures of knowledge and skill so that pupils are empowered and enabled to retain and utilise their learning to be safe.

Attendance

Pupils are involved in the promotion of attendance through creating publicity posters.



The Attendance rate at Cleaswell Hill is 88.57%, compared with the national special school attendance rate of 87.3% (DfE data to 27 January 2025).

A parent survey carried out in January 2025 found that 94% of parents/carers feel supported by the school's attendance procedures.

Targeted support meetings continue 3-4 weekly with the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer, Dawn Westerby.

We have a reducing number of Persistently Absent (PA) pupils who miss 10% or more of their possible sessions. We continue to focus on these pupils as a priority, using an analysis of data and suite of attendance guidance documents to monitor and understand the deeper roots which may be creating barriers to attendance and to work with families to overcome these.

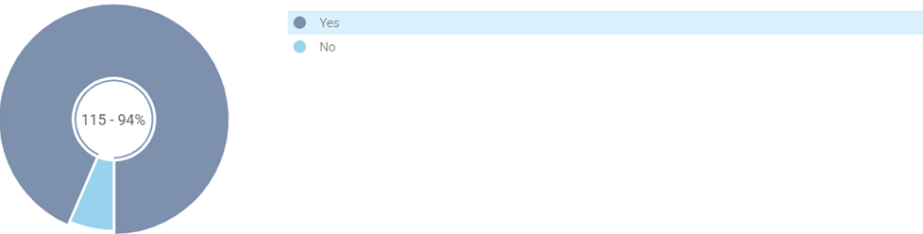
Persistently Absent Pupils

2023	29 pupils	12.5%
2024	22 pupils	9.5%
2025	15 pupils	5.9%

The number of pupils on the Child Missing Education (CME) list has increased from 9 to 12 in 12 months. The complexity of our cohort means that in exceptional circumstances (Head Teacher decision), where it is in a pupil's best interests, school consider a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. We offer these, currently 6, as a supportive adjustment for a minority of pupils who are struggling to attend school full time safely or due to a medical condition. The Local Authority, CYPs and Disabled Childrens Team are kept informed and involved in the process.

Julie Brown, Karyn McMahon

School supports our child and family with school attendance as successfully as possible.



Personal Development

The Enrichment passport program is now embedded across school. Learning walks have taken place across the Core and Extended pathways, with Engagement pathway walks planned in the summer term. Following the learning walks, feedback was shared with class leads within the pathways providing context around the passport use with the pupils. Pathway assemblies were used to share great practice observed and inspiration for the scope of their use. The observations themselves facilitated discussion with the curriculum and phase leads around how the core curriculum can support opportunities to extend beyond the academic, technical and vocational. The core curriculum review will, through it's design and implementation, aim to en-

hance the quality and extent of personal development opportunities. In the summer term we look forward to the opportunity to explain to parents and carers the purpose of the Enrichment Passport program and show them their child's achievements so far.



Rachael Ford-Hutchinson

Behaviour

At Cleaswell Hill we have a strong commitment to understanding and addressing the needs of our pupils, particularly when it comes to managing unsettled and dysregulated behavior. By recognising the link between communication and behavior, the staff can effectively use a range of strategies to help students feel more secure and ready to engage. For example;

- Consistent use of language based on NAPPI approaches and Relational Practice (Cleaswell Code; Ready, Respectful, Safe)
- Visual supports, including contingency maps
- Active listening
- Sensory strategies

The emphasis on de-escalation showcases the importance of creating a calm and supportive environment where pupils can express themselves and work through their emotions. Each student is unique, requiring responsive, personalised and tailored interventions based on their individual needs and circumstances that foster a positive and inclusive atmosphere for learning.

Incidents continue to be recorded within the PBS Cloud system and a weekly behaviour update during SLT meetings indicates the most high-profile pupils. This allows holistic discussions to take place within a multidisciplinary team, identifying patterns and leading to a responsive approach to pupils.

Discussions with staff from the NAPPI organisation have taken place to develop an incident report which visually represents the proportion of low-level behaviour records compared to behaviour incidents. This will allow us to quickly identify high-priority pupils and ensure targeted and timely interventions that effectively respond to the needs of each individual.

There has been 1 fixed term exclusion during the spring term.

Julie Brown

Therapy

There continues to be close collaboration between educational and therapy staff with a drive to ensure that pupil needs are effectively identified and that therapeutic strategies are integrated within the curriculum. As the pupil populations alter over time, curriculum development needs to be an iterative process whereby multi-disciplinary partnership is extremely valuable.

Kate Thompson, a Qualified Teacher for the Visually Impaired, along with two colleagues from the Sensory Support Team, recently delivered a whole-school training session on Cerebral Visual Impairment. The session provided valuable insights, practical strategies and resources to better support pupils with Visual Impairment and Cerebral Visual Impairment across the school.

Jo (OT) and Kate continue to enhance the provision for pupils with visual impairments, focusing on comprehensive assessment, staff training, and rehabilitation strategies. Their collaborative efforts ensure that pupils receive tailored support that maximises their learning and engagement in the school environment.

For children with physical disability, Jo's role includes collaboration with parents, carers and external healthcare professionals to ensure the effective implementation and enhancement of NHS therapy within the school setting. More recently, a key aspect of her role has included coordinating training for school staff delivered by healthcare colleagues, covering essential areas such as epilepsy management, gastrostomy care and other specialist medical needs.

Multi-disciplinary teamwork has been critical in creating a smooth reintegration process for a pupil who has been very poorly, having undergone brain surgery. This work has involved liaising with parents, medical teams, NHS therapists and school staff to facilitate a phased return while ensuring continued support during ongoing chemotherapy treatment. It is wonderful to see this child doing so well when he is

attending school for sessions.

Speech and Language Therapy provision continues to develop across all pathways. We are pleased to welcome our new Speech and Language Therapist, Amy, who has now joined the therapy team. Amy is primarily working with children in the Extended Pathway, helping to increase staff understanding of child need and develop educational provision. She is also working with children with Lan-



guage Disorder and co-facilitating LEGO Therapy sessions with the therapy assistants.

The engagement assessment tool remains an ongoing project, ensuring education staff can accurately assess and support students within the Engagement Pathway. The tool requires some further refinements and collaborative working with Juliet Ruddick (Lead Therapist) to develop the Sensory and Physical section of the assessment. These additions and some technical supports are required before use within the Engagement Pathway.

An action-based research project focused on Gestalt Language Processing has commenced, involving staff in Oak and Wansbeck classes within the Engagement Pathway. This research aligns with our work with Northumbria University and Rachael's recent qualification as an NLA Trained Clinician (Natural Language Ac-

quisition). Rachael will lead the project with support from Kelly (Therapy Assistant). Becky (Therapy Assistant) will also support with the research, information gathering and analysis of the findings; she is also one of the Teaching Assistants in Wansbeck Class. The findings from this project will contribute to a greater understanding of how school can support Gestalt Language Processors and will influence communication strategies and approaches across school.

A new initiative to promote Makaton within the school is also underway. Rachael and Kelly are leading a project to increase the use of Makaton signs by introducing a 'Sign of the Week' and a half-termly song linked to the school values. This initiative will further support communication development and inclusion for all students.

Speech and Language Therapy interventions are continuing to be completed within Core and Extended Pathways, facilitated by Lorraine (Therapy Assistant),



Kelly and Amy. The team are working on pre- and post-therapy informal assessment tools to inform intervention planning, ensuring that speech and language support is targeted effectively.

Recognising the potential for professional isolation within a small therapy team operating outside of large NHS departments, we have now completed the first multi-disciplinary CPD group with other therapists working in Special Educational Needs. This was a productive meeting and includes representatives from two other SEN schools and three private providers. This group will foster best practice sharing and help the Cleaswell Hill therapy team maintain professional development, ensuring compliance with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Code

of Practice.

Rebound Therapy provision continues to develop positively. Danielle, has joined the team, replacing Kate, who left her employment at Cleaswell Hill. We are trialling two small group sessions that include class peers in each. These targeted group sessions enable the Rebound team to focus not only on physical exercise and therapeutic goals but also on essential social and communication skills. Through group sessions, pupils develop teamwork, cooperation, and confidence, enhancing their overall learning experience.

Following Jo's whole-school presentation on the benefits of Rebound Therapy, there has been a notable increase in referrals. Additionally, we have collaborated with phase leaders to introduce flexible slots, allowing immediate access for high-need pupils, ensuring timely intervention and support.

The Rebound team is now fully established and has all necessary resources. However, a key challenge in expanding the service further is the lack of a dedicated space where the trampoline can remain set up, which would significantly improve accessibility and efficiency.

The hydrotherapy pool remains a vital resource within the school, offering high-quality one-to-one and small-group sessions daily. The warm water provides therapeutic benefits for children with physical disabilities and fosters intensive interaction for those with complex needs requiring support with communication, emotional well-being, and sensory regulation. Sessions are tailored to meet the diverse needs of pupils, including small groupwork involving cognition and learning activities (e.g. maths-based games) and structured water skills sessions focusing on foundational swimming techniques.

Due to the high demand for hydrotherapy sessions, the Spring Term operated on a busier timetable, which has been continually evaluated and adjusted to ensure smooth operation. However, the increased usage led to congestion risks, prompting further modifications for the Summer Term to alleviate these issues. The aim is to provide the opportunity for hydrotherapy to as many children as possible, while providing high-quality sessions and adhering closely to health and safety procedures.

The pool also provides a valuable resource for the local community, providing therapeutic support for individuals with medical and rehabilitation needs.

In addition to his role as Pool Manager, John Carruthers works closely with key staff to oversee out-of-hours pool hire, contributing further to the pool's overall revenue.

From April 2024, income generated from hires stands at £13,527.

Juliet Ruddick

Parent Partnership

Trusting relationships are built and maintained through open and honest communications and, although communication and interaction with parents and carers can differ across each of the phases, there continues to be the following whole school approaches:



- Daily diary entries outlining lessons / activities and general info
- Tapestry observations with photos and descriptions of sessions, along with 2-way communication
- Phone calls home as and when needed
- School Ping
- Face to face meetings when necessary or requested as well as drop off / pick up time
- Facebook posts
- EHCP review meetings

- School events (e.g. Christmas, assemblies etc)
- Regular after school clubs aimed at each of the pathways
- Citizens Advice sessions held in school every half term to support with benefit entitlement, benefit application forms, food parcels, relationship breakdown, energy advice, etc
- Supporting pupils to attend residential visits / school trips
- Parents evening.

For pupils with more complex needs and those in post 16 education, the staff teams work even more closely with parents and carers by:

- Monitoring the impact of medication and communicating with parents and CYPS to ensure best outcomes for the pupil
- Working closely with social workers, families and respite managers to ensure pupils receive appropriate respite
- Supplying visuals and supporting their use
- Parents information evening for pupils transitioning to The Appleby Centre
- Supporting parents with post school destinations (e.g. college, social care provision)

Julie Brown

Admissions

Projections for September 2025 currently stand at 256 pupils with a breakdown of learner groups as follows:

Junior Engagement +	3	Senior Engagement +	7	Total Engagement +	10
Junior Engagement	25	Senior Engagement	17	Total Engagement	42
Junior Core	47	Senior Core	55	Total Core	102
Junior Extended	47	Senior Extended	55	Total Extended	102
Total Junior	122	Total Senior	134	TOTAL	256

We have 15 leavers in July 2025 with four placements to be confirmed. The need



for spaces remains a significant issue in being able to support the complex needs of some pupils within school. We have recently met with and been clear with the LA regarding our capacity to admit any more learners. We highlighted the potential effect on staff retention numbers, spaces, and safety of individuals.

We continue to receive approximately 10-15 papers requesting a place at Cleaswell every fortnight. The Admissions team meets every two weeks and consists of a deputy headteacher (chair), 4 phase leads, the lead therapist and the headteacher. In meetings we deliberate papers that have been sent to us from the Local Authority School Placement, Resource and Transition Commissioning (SPRTC) Panel. Papers are either sent as a parental request or Local Authority target choice. A decision is made in this meeting whether we can potentially meet need or not according to the EHCP and accompanying paperwork.

To ensure that we can meet each child's unique needs and provide the appropriate provision as stated in the EHCP, it is essential that we observe prospective pupils at their current setting and discuss current presentation with relevant professionals before agreeing to their placement. We have found EHCP paperwork to be less than reliable when ascertaining the needs of a learner, so we felt this to be an essential part of our admissions process.

We are full for September 2025 and we currently have 3 projected spaces available for September 2026.

Emma Dunn

Equalities

We have updated our equality information and objectives which will be published once ratified by the Governing Body. These are not new ideas, as they already form an important part of our school development and improvement that we will continue to build on.

Our plans for the next 4-year cycle 2025-2029:

- To continue to use evidence and research proven to build a curriculum and school community that embraces, celebrates, highlights and recognises diversity
- Curriculum delivery will be within and contribute to an enabling environment, flourishing relationships and content that whispers 'you belong'
- Representation through the curriculum and in the everyday life of the school of race, culture, religion and belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender and gender questioning identities ensures that every child is seen and recognises that we respect and value difference
- Developing the workforce to use lived experience, training and research to better understand and support children's diverse and complex needs by an-

ticipating and harnessing challenges and using an asset-based approach to signpost, help and support one another in developing a culture of acceptance and equality

What this looks like in practice for the 4 years of the cycle:

- Ongoing curriculum development and integrated therapies
- Fundamentals of Movement Curriculum development
- Physical activity promoting healthy lifestyles, supporting engagement, interaction and communication across school
- Personal Development through Enrichment Passports
- Outward facing partnerships and sharing best practice to disseminate learning and innovation
- Autism Education Trust training in 3 aspects disseminated and made available through a SLA
- Collaborations and partnerships with local universities, learning hubs, schools and MATs
- Developing our culture of vigilance to emerging safeguarding threats to which children with disabilities may be more vulnerable: AI, online grooming, spiking, harmful online content, substance misuse, prejudice and hate crimes
- Staff training on issues including, 'navigating identity through education; towards equity and social justice'

Gill Finch, Karyn McMahon

Educational Visits



We seek to ensure that every pupil has access to a wide range of educational experiences as an entitlement and recognise the significant educational value of visits and activities which take place away from the immediate school environment.

Visits and off-site activities support, enrich and extend the curriculum in many subject areas. They also encourage co-operation, promote team work and help with the application of problem solving skills and the development of independence and self-confidence.

It is our aim to ensure that all visits and off-site activities are safe, well-managed and

educationally beneficial.

So far this term, there have been 60 EVOLVE forms processed and approved for off-site visits, including; local area walks, Sunderland Winter Gardens, Penshaw Monument, St James' Park, Seven Stories and Ouseburn Farm to name but a few!

Pupils from The Appleby Centre were involved in a table cricket tournament, organised by Northumberland Cricket Board, which they won!



Their teacher, Mr Jackson said,

"It was an incredible experience for them all and great to see the team spirit and camaraderie when competing against other schools. They were so supportive of each other!"

Soon they will be travelling to Durham to take part in the regional final and we wish them luck.

Julie Brown

Development of Outward Facing Partnerships

AET



The Autism Education Trust (AET) training program is now a fully established initiative that can be adapted and delivered to different audiences across Northumberland. Led by Rachael Howitt, the team has ensured that training remains current, engaging and meaningful for delegates. Training is available in three key areas: Making Sense of Autism, Good Autism Practice and Understanding Good Autism Practice, plus the AET Framework for Leaders. This training has been widely advertised to education providers, with seven sessions being deliv-

ered and generating school income. The significant demand for high-quality, evidence-based training remains evident across the county although uptake has been limited, possibly due to funding constraints.

A review of delegate numbers has led to Cleaswell Hill School offering the Making Sense of Autism module for free to help disseminate best practices. Training courses continue to be updated to keep content fresh and relevant. Finn McMahon (Teaching Assistant and AET Trainer) has successfully delivered two AET courses, receiving excellent delegate feedback. However, barriers remain in reaching education providers outside of Cleaswell Hill School, particularly Post-16 providers. Rachael is actively planning strategies to expand training outreach to these providers over the coming months.

New initiatives include monthly Making Sense of Autism training sessions hosted at Northumberland County Council in partnership with the SEN transport team, which have resulted in a significant decrease in complaints to the SEN Transport Team following delegate participation. Additionally, six commissioned training sessions with Wise Academies, facilitated through the Great North Stronger Practice Hub, are scheduled for the remainder of the 2024-25 academic year. Rachael and Jamie Wheadon (Phase Leader and AET Trainer) are also preparing for World Autism Awareness Month in April 2025. Plans include a social media strategy featuring information and resources to raise awareness, culminating in a Spectrum Colour Walk.

The training sessions continue to be advertised via email, Facebook, LinkedIn, the school's website, and most effectively, by word of mouth. We remain committed to ensuring that high-quality autism training is accessible to as many education providers as possible, further strengthening provision and awareness across the region.

SEND Advisor



The SEND Advisor role has seen a shift in some of the tasks assigned relating to support for other schools. I continue to support schools regarding strategies to enhance universal provision, carry out observations to ascertain whether specialist provision is appropriate for individuals where a request has been made and attendance at school placement resource and transition commissioning (SPRTC) panel. However, the role has also seen an increase in leading SEND peer reviews of other mainstream schools. Being the only person on panel with active SEND experience, I have been able to support with the effective use of resources in identifying appropriate placements for learners, whilst reiterating the fact that special schools are under significant pressure due to capacity.

Other schools are also able to benefit from the expertise of professionals at Cleaswell Hill. Where a request for support with strategies for a young person is made, I have been able to delegate responsibility to another leader to build multi-dimensional links as well as upskilling those with experiences of advisory support.

Fusion Learning Hub



The next part of the plan for the Fusion Learning Hub is to create bespoke packages of support that can be advertised to other schools and specialist settings. This begun with Rachael Howitt and Abi McCarthy designing a bespoke offer for the Great North Early Years Stronger Practice Hub (GNEYSPPH). They have been able to meet with the hub lead following attendance at a conference with other hub members and Bridget Philipson (MP). The package is going to incorporate training sessions and workshops based primarily on communication and interaction and enabling environments.

We are also working to set up a training day where we run a series of workshops at Cleaswell and give professionals the opportunity to experience a range of sessions including Forest School, Attention Autism, Colourful Semantics and TACPAC. This training day will take place in September to allow time for planning and preparation and professionals will be invited to buy tickets to attend.

NPQSENCo Facilitation



The facilitation for the new NPQSENCo award which is being run by the 3 Rivers Teaching School Hub (3RTSH) on behalf of the Ambition Institute has proved to be very popular and extremely successful. The school is reimbursed for any time spent delivering the conferences and clinics, and best practice continues to be spread within the County. The 3RTSH has now asked if a further group of candidates can be facilitated as there has been such an uptake for the qualification. This is the only compulsory and non-subsidised award in the NPQ suite, so candidates are dedicated to achieving.

Northumbria University



As well as working with Northumbria University in designing and carrying out a piece of research that focuses on the use of metacognitive practice within the classroom and the impact of classroom-based action research, Northumbria University are keen for us to deliver another lecture to the cohort of teacher trainees this year at

their BA conference based on Coach Lane campus.

We have also been in recent talks about the possibility of becoming a hub of Northumbria University where we can develop a partnership in practical and theoretical delivery of learning, while the university facilitates the assessment and marking of work to be accredited. This could be towards a professional qualification such as a PGCert, PGDip or MA qualification. There would be a reduced fee for the school's involvement and we could possibly invite other educational professionals if appropriate. This could form a possible income generation if portioned out.

There is an opportunity to co-design a course and the model for delivery with the knowledge of what works best for working teaching professionals. An income could also be generated from this e.g. charges for our staff to co-facilitate.

The university are also developing international links and discussed the possibility of supporting with short course delivery to a group of Chinese students. School would be paid to deliver/ support with practical elements of the course and students visits.

External Partnerships



We continue to work with two other special schools within a range of areas across school including Engagement Pathway curriculum and moderation and English, Literacy and Communication leadership. These have been very successful meetings in which an engagement external moderation log has been designed. We have been able to discuss and share best practice relating to new research and technology within literacy learning.

Emma Dunn

School Links

School continues our outward facing approach. Great links with local and regional businesses are being created through our fundraising activities (see Fundraising Report).

Additional links, are outlined below

- Student placements: Sunderland University (PGCE), Newcastle University (PGCE), Northumbria University (B.Ed., PGCE), SaLT, Nursing
- Work Experience placements for pupils
- Local FE Colleges
- Chartered College of Teaching

- Thinking School Network
- The National College
- Sex Ed Forum
- Child Exploitation Online Protection (CEOP)
- ARFID Champions Programme (NHS England)
- Newman Trust Holidays
- Federation of Special School Leaders (FLSE)
- Northumberland Mental Health Leads
- National Network of Special Schools
- Magic Breakfast



Spring 2025

Value - Independence

Training Day	6 January
NCC GDPR Environmental Inspection/Audit	15 January
Governor Resource Management Committee Meeting	23 January
NCC Health and Safety Inspection/Audit	21/23 January
Governor Resource Management Committee Meeting	6 February
Non-uniform Day (NSPCC Number Day)	7 February
Commuted Hours 3/6	12 February
Governor Resource Management Committee Meeting	14 February
Governor Strategic Policy & Direction Committee Meeting	14 February
Non-uniform Day (Valentines)	21 February
End of Half Term	21 February

Value - Integrity

Commuted Hours 4/6	5 March
Non-uniform Day (World Book Day Celebration)	7 March
SIP Visit	12 March
Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award	13 March
Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award	20 March
Non-uniform Day (Red Nose Day/Comic Relief)	21 March
Phonics Assessment Week	24 March
Full Governing Body Meeting (Spring)	25 March
Parents Evening 1/2	1 April
World Autism Awareness Day	2 April
Parents Evening 2/2	2 April
Non-uniform Day (Easter)	11 April
End of Spring Term	11 April