



Cleaswell Hill School Headteacher's Report to Governors

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

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Introduction



In many respects, things felt simpler back in the 1970s. With just three television channels, choices were few and expectations low. For those of a certain age, the test card—complete with a scary clown, chalkboard and girl—was a familiar sight, marking the space between the end of programming and the start of the next day. Sitting through Open University broadcasts, waiting for favourite shows to begin was a regular feature on a Saturday and then came the big Saturday morning dilemma: *Swap Shop* or *Tiswas*?

Fast forward to today and the picture is very different. Hundreds of channels, countless streaming services—Netflix, Prime, Disney+ and more—mean we're constantly surrounded by options. But as many of us have discovered when trying to choose a film with friends or family, more choice doesn't always make life easier.

This phenomenon—the *Paradox of Choice*—suggests that while some choice is empowering, too much can become paralysing. It can slow us down, increase anxiety and even reduce satisfaction with the decisions we make.

Cleaswell Hill School in 2025 feels much more complex. Our staff are making thousands of decisions each day in a rapidly changing educational landscape. The national SEND crisis continues to evolve, while financial pressures and increased need add further challenge. At times, steering school improvement has felt more like navigating a maze than walking a straight path.

As far as school development is concerned, no one person can make all the decisions without compromising impact. For this reason, we built a leadership team that is both broad in specialised expertise and unified in purpose. Each senior leader brings a depth of focus—whether it's phase leadership, outreach, pathway curriculum development, behaviour or therapy, the list is endless. It's a model built not on managing everything, but on managing the right things—together. Like choos-

ing a film, it helps to have someone rummaging through the romcoms, another sifting through the sci-fi and another for absorbing, adrenaline-filled action.

This collaborative leadership structure has enabled us to move from simply reacting to shaping our future. In a school setting where the number of daily decisions can feel overwhelming, this approach has helped cut through the noise—bringing focus, reducing uncertainty and ensuring that what matters most doesn't get lost in the volume of options. In short, it's helped us counteract the Paradox of Choice.

Within this report, you'll find evidence of improvements in provision, stronger outcomes and a continued focus on meeting the needs of our increasingly diverse cohort.

Looking ahead, our aim remains to create the conditions where leadership is sustainable and secure—capable of navigating and responding to the multitude of future choices.

Mike Jackson, June 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 visited school on 16th June for the summer term SIP visit. The re-

port should be available for the summer governors meeting on 30th June.



Section 2 - Curriculum

Curriculum

Curriculum sums up the learning experience of students. Curriculum is not static but is constantly evolving.

For the changing cohort of learners accessing our Core Pathway, data and class-based evidence highlighted that learner outcomes were below expected in some areas of the curriculum. The knowledge-based focus of an adapted national curriculum was proving too complex and challenging. The dominant organising emphasis on knowledge was proving difficult for pupils to retain and retrieve to apply functionally. Knowledge, of course, remains an important element, however what was working well was the skills-oriented curriculum. At Cleaswell Hill we have a razor-sharp focus on curriculum and work exceptionally hard as a team of educators and therapists to design learner-centred curriculum, including whole-person development and lifelong learning. To enhance current practice, Junior and Senior Core Leads have been redesigning the curriculum to combine the best of what we know works to ensure that pupils have access to an inspiring, expansive curriculum that improves their learning.

A crucial part of this process is curriculum alignment, which plays a large role in ensuring consistent and robust delivery across school. Alignment is facilitated by clear

and well-articulated educational goals. Curriculum content needs to work together to enhance learning, with children being able to make connections which can be built on. Poor alignment (missing content, incomplete delivery in previous years), disadvantages children by impeding subsequent learning and creating gaps. So, colleagues are working collaboratively to develop this 'spiral' curriculum, harmonise what and how the curriculum will be delivered and how to effectively assess it.

Building links across subjects was identified as a key factor of curriculum quality in Ofsted's research into curriculum.

We look forward to teaching a cross-curricular, project-based approach to learning with practical application of concepts covering a realistic range of subject disciplines, alongside the core skills of literacy and numeracy.

Karyn McMahon



Professional Development and Learning

Teachers/Class Leads require both curriculum content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge for effective teaching.

Knowledge can be developed through collaborative planning, peer observations and group work. It is also reasonable to suggest that this is further promoted when practitioners have a better understanding of an initiative or process. Teachers have increased confidence to make informed decisions about the curriculum and how

to deliver it based on relevant and contextual class-based action research.

Teachers are encouraged and supported to embrace creative thinking as part of the agenda for their professional learning.

School leaders seek to embed creative thinking and ensure an explicit theory of change (how or why a programme or intervention is expected to lead to positive changes), recognise the importance of distributed leadership, cultivate a culture of curiosity, innovation and risk-taking.

Teachers' professional development as a pedagogy of noticing through inquiry continues to be sustained over time. This investment, commitment and responsive action supports teachers to take professional ownership, embed practices at their own pace in a non-judgemental community of practice.

Research proposals for this academic year are below. Phase Leaders/Therapists will be sharing the impact of these on Wednesday 2 July at 3.30pm. We will be joined by Lynn Watson, School Improvement Partner and colleagues from Northumbria University who are involved in their own research about Cleaswell Hill's practice, 'Professional Curiosity: one school's culture of embedded action research'. Governors are very welcome to join us.

- Does presenting new material in small steps increase pupils' ability to accurately encode information into their long-term memory?
- Does the use of consistent visual thinking frames in structured sessions (core and fringe boards) allow children to answer questions at a higher language level independently?
- Does the use of manipulatives (Numicon) support the teaching of more complex mathematical objectives? - does repetition across sessions support/enhance this further?
- The impact of post task self-reflection on developing metacognitive skills and improving writing performance
- Can the use of action games and visual thinking frames support the development of tall, tail and middle letter positioning when practised explicitly each week?
- To investigate whether explicitly discussing classroom behaviour with learners promotes the Cleaswell Code and increase behaviours for learning
- Does the use of a "What Can I Do?" visual infusion prompt develop students'

independent thinking skills to build resilience as part of information retrieval and problem solve with increasing autonomy?

- Does the use of a word processor enhance the quality of a pupil's written work – in relation to structured answers from a specific text in English?
- Using echolalia to build language: Does the use of adult-modelled Gestalt Scripts during child-led play enhance children's communication?
- Does the use of an incentive-based timetable increase productivity in lessons for an extended/core pupil with SEMH?
- Does the use of fringe boards in Language for Thinking sessions scaffold pupils' retrieval skills and responses to blank level questions - does repetition across sessions support/enhance this further?
- Can adapting a pupil-focused approach to the EEF 7-step model scaffolding framework deliberately shift responsibility from the teacher to the pupil?
- Does the use of the new universal core/fringe boards support spoken language output for children in the Core Pathway?
- Do children eat with their eyes? Research on how food is presented and if this has an impact of the amount explored/consumed
- How does limiting screen time influence the development of metacognitive skills in pupils with severe and complex autism?
- The impact of post task self-reflection on developing metacognitive skills and improving writing performance
- How effective is the use of the core and fringe system to support language acquisition and written sentence structure within an extended pathway class?
- Does the implementation of calming/ relaxing music sustain regulation throughout sessions?
- Can regular and intense vestibular activation positively influence posture, emotional regulation and engagement with learning?

Karyn McMahon

Phonics and Spelling Update

Phonics continues to be delivered systematically 4 times a week in groups informed from the termly phonics assessment data. Children transition to their classrooms at 9.20 in preparation for their session. All staff who deliver phonics are trained to deliver ELS at pace and with consistency.

The spelling programme is being delivered to 4 groups within school, with another group potentially starting within the summer term if all their gaps are securely retaught and reassessment shows they are ready. The programme delivers content from the year 2 and year 3 National Curriculum. As a school, we purchased the year 3 programme last term and successfully implemented this into a class within school who are making good progress. The year 4 programme is purchased ready for delivery when these children require it in the Autumn/Spring term.

Phonics continues to be high profile in school. Lessons are modelled regularly to staff and staff have the opportunity to observe and have sessions modelled to them in their classes. I continue to deliver training externally to schools and EVOLVE days which include lesson observations, analysis of data and provide targets for the SLT to implement in their schools as well as whole school initial training.



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 ensured

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 70 children who were accessing phonics daily, 68 children made progress in GPC's and 68 in blending. The two children who did not make progress in blending and GPC are accessing an intervention during the summer term.

Currently 76 children in school are accessing the ELS phonics programme and 39 the ELS spelling programme.

Helen Moulton

Targeted Support Summer 2025 – Academic Interventions

During the spring term we successfully delivered 6 different academic interventions, offering 20 places to a total of 10 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 spring term, 90% of children made progress using the ELS phonics tracker data and in school assessment data. 1 child did not make progress shown through their data, however, gaps in their learning have been filled. Throughout this term, we are successfully delivering 8 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 16 intervention places this term to 12 pupils.

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

Helen Moulton

ECTs

Cleaswell Hill School offers an excellent Early Career Teaching 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.

Over the past 3 years, 5 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 ECTs (5 first years and 2 second years) working at Cleaswell.

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



Section 3- Staffing and Finance

Pupil Statistics

SIMS Analysis (Reg x Gender) Numbers represent: Count			SIMS Analysis (Year x Gender) Numbers represent:		
	F	M	Total		
Engagement - Dove	1	3	4		
Engagement - Starling	0	7	7		
Phase 1 - Blossom	1	6	7		
Phase 1 - Juniper	2	7	9	Year R	1
Phase 1 - Oak	2	3	5	Year 1	2
Phase 1 - Willow	4	3	7	Year 2	4
Phase 2 - Coquet	0	6	6	Year 3	2
Phase 2 - Rede	3	7	10	Year 4	5
Phase 2 - Tweed	4	7	11	Year 5	6
Phase 2 - Tyne	5	5	10	Year 6	11
Phase 2 - Wansbeck	3	4	7	Year 7	14
Phase 3 - Belsay	5	8	13	Year 8	17
Phase 3 - Craggside	2	10	12	Year 9	19
Phase 3 - Lindisfarne	3	9	12	Year 10	17
Phase 3 - Warkworth	2	6	8	Year 11	17
Phase 4 - Deer	0	13	13	Year 12	23
Phase 4 - Fox	2	9	11	Year 13	31
Phase 4 - Otter	5	9	14	Total	41
Phase 4 - Red Squirrel	3	7	10		28
Phase 5 - Alnmouth	1	9	10		16
Phase 5 - Amble	7	3	10		12
Phase 5 - Beadnell	3	5	8		2
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	183	250	Report Produced	
Sixth Form Information Only	7	7	14		

Premises Update

After 17 years in service to Cleaswell Hill School, we said goodbye to our oldest mini-bus. I'm pleased to report that we purchased another 9-seater Ford Transit Custom to fill this capacity gap before it went off to minibus heaven.

A fourth converted container was delivered onto our main yard in the Easter holidays and it has already proved a valuable space to have.

In our never-ending quest for additional small spaces, ID Construction & Joinery completed the formation of a small room in what was known as the Breakout Space. This is being used to support some pupils who benefit from the use of smaller teaching spaces.

I'm pleased to report that after a long wait, the pumping chamber and pump for the OLC building has been replaced with a more fit-for-purpose pump that will hopefully reduce the number of breakdowns we have been experiencing.

Looking forward to the summer holidays, we already have several projects booked in, including the usual annual redecoration, hall floor refurbishment, the removal of problematic bi-folding doors in our OLC classrooms and further improvements to external lighting on our main yard.

Jordan Tolley

Staffing

We currently have a total of 178 active staffing contracts, including one fixed-term teacher and nine fixed-term Teaching Assistants.

Staff Absence – Summer Term (up to June 2nd):

- Class Leads: 7 days
- Support Staff: 163 days

New Appointments:

- Three new Teaching Assistants have been employed (two on fixed-term contracts).
- One new teacher has also been appointed on a fixed-term basis.

After 33 years Chris Davis (HLTA) is retiring. Chris has worked with hundreds of Cleaswell pupils over her long career and seen the school grow and change in numerous ways. Chris, affectionally known as the 'Wicked Witch', usually worked with our older pupils and has a particular gift of sweet talking/arm twisting local businesses for work experience places. Prior to working at Cleaswell Chris worked at what is now the Appleby Centre running a youth club; it is slightly uncanny that the last few years of her career have been spent at the Appleby Centre. We all wish Chris the best of luck in her retirement with numerous grand and great grand children she is not going to get bored. Fly safely Chris!

We also wish Jenn Little, Class Lead for Tweed, the best of luck as she prepares to leave us at the end of the summer term. Jenn will be moving to Cedars School in Gateshead to be closer to home. Her dedication and commitment to the pupils and staff at Cleaswell Hill have made a lasting impact, she will be greatly missed by all. We wish her every success in her new role.

Julie Brown



Budget Overview

The budget meeting for the 2025-2026 financial year was held on Monday 24th March 2025 with the school accounting assistant and a senior accountant from Northumberland County Council. A draft copy of the budget was received on Tuesday 25th March 2025 and a draft summary sheet circulated at the full Governing body meeting.

The resource management committee approved the final budget on 28th April 2025, based on 255 pupils on roll from September. A summary was circulated to the full Governing body and the final approved budget was submitted to Northumberland County Council on 30th April 2025.

The Government has confirmed a pay award of 4% for all teachers; this will apply to all pay scales and allowances from 1 September 2025. The Department for Education have stated that they will fund 3% of the increase, via 1.3% already provided to the school and an additional 1.7%. The school is expected to cover around another 1% of the increase through 'increased productivity and smarter spending'.

The NJC have submitted a full and final offer of a 3.2% pay award on all pay points and allowances for support staff members. If accepted, the payment would be pro-rata'd for term time only employees and be backdated to 1 April 2025. The NJC pay offer also includes the deletion of pay point 2 from the NJC pay spine from 1 April 2026. The Department for Education have said that they would fund 2.2%, 1.3% already provided to the school and an additional 0.9%. The school would be expected to cover around another 1% of the increase.

The current Cleaswell Hill School staffing structure and proposed staffing structure for the 2025-2026 academic year were reviewed by the resource management committee on 6th June 2025.

A recent school report summary sheet and budget summary sheet have been circulated with the additional papers for the summer 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 held a non-uniform day to celebrate 'red nose day' on 21st March and raised £73.11 in aid of Comic Relief (registered charity number 326568). We were delighted to receive a donation of £959.90 during the month of March as a result of our participation in Asda's Cashpots for Schools programme and £500.00 towards music equipment and resources as part of the Co-op Local Community Fund scheme, both kindly supported by parents, carers, pupils, staff and

members of the local community. We also gratefully received a donation of £350 from The Morpeth Lions towards a horticultural area at The Appleby Centre this month.



We were thrilled to accept the delivery of a chocolate Easter egg for every child at Cleaswell Hill School and £135.00 for Cleaswell Hill Foundation from The Foresters Arms, Bedlington Masonic Building and Ashington Masonic Building on 10th April; the children thoroughly enjoyed hosting the motorbikes on the school yard! Cleaswell Hill School pupils held a non-uniform day and Phase 1 and 2 pupils completed a sponsored 'bounceathon' on 11th April and raised a phenomenal £866.22 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation; the pupils used a wide range of resources such as yoga balls, bouncy castles and trampolines to bounce for a whole day! We were very pleased to receive a generous donation of £1,500 from Lowes Financial Management towards lots of exciting new resources during the month of April.

Our annual health and wellbeing week from 28th April – 2nd May raised £332.99 towards health and wellbeing resources, equipment and experiences. Cleaswell Hill School staff and pupils completed a wide variety of sponsored fitness challenges including running, boxing, yoga, swimming, local walks, gardening, obstacle courses, dancing, mindfulness activities and more! Cleaswell Hill Foundation also hosted a coffee morning at The Appleby Centre on 17th May for members of the local community and raised a fantastic £1,399.41 towards performing arts resources and equipment; donations are still being received to date. Our non-uniform day on 23rd May also raised £43.75 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 collection boxes continue to generate essential funds for our charity.

Our local community collection box at The Cherry Tree Bar and Grill raised £164.37, our school clothes recycling bank generated £22.35, our community collection box

at The Travellers Rest generated £53.06, our link with Easyfundraising raised £95.22 and our lottery generated £528.00 from March 2025 – May 2025.

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

Our future planned fundraising events for this term in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation include a family picnic on 11th July and a non uniform day on 18th July.

Lauren Caisley



Section 4 - Specific Issues

Safeguarding

Safeguarding sits at the heart of educational life. It is not just a duty but a promise we make to every young person.

In an increasingly complex digital and social landscape, schools have become a frontline defence for children's safety and wellbeing. There are urgent trends that we must understand, from the explosion of online safeguarding risks to the deepening crisis in children's mental health.

- The Internet Watch Foundation reported a 380% surge in AI-generated child

- abuse imagery in just one year
- Schools must now tackle threats such as deepfake imagery and online exploitation, which barely existed a few years ago
- Multi-agency coordination, increasingly critical, requires schools to adapt continuously

Digital life is no longer a parallel universe for young people, it's where they live. Safeguarding practice must reflect this shift. We closely monitor digital trends and make curriculum developments teaching digital safety and educating students about digital empathy.

School provides a reporting platform for online abuse on the school website, 'CEOP'. Face to face reporting is most common, however, it would be a missed opportunity to not offer multiple avenues and complement face to face interactions with a digital reporting method for those students who are digitally fluent.

The Summative Safeguarding Report (in the information pack) draws directly on the experiences in school over this academic year.

Karyn McMahon

Attendance

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) continues to present a growing challenge for special schools across the UK. With increasing numbers of children experiencing heightened anxiety, mental health difficulties or trauma responses that impact their ability to attend school. Professionals are seeking effective, compassionate strategies to support re-engagement.

The staff at Cleaswell Hill continue to explore the complex factors contributing to EBSA and the latest thinking on how to address them.

Drawing on extensive experience, the team consider current research and possible methods of intervention that help re-establish trust, strengthen relationships, and re-engage both children and their families with school life.

Currently, there are four pupils who are not attending school; two of these are accessing education other than at school (EOTAS) and two have significant input from CYPs, Children's Social Care and the Education Welfare Officer. One pupil is accessing remote learning with a bespoke package from school. Six pupils are on part time timetables; these are permitted in exceptional circumstances when a pupil's health or wellbeing necessitates a reduced schedule and are designed to maximise their educational opportunities. Part time timetables are not intended as a long-term solu-

tion and regular reviews and a plan for the pupils return to full-time education is in place, albeit this journey may not be a quick one.

Further attendance data is available in the Summative Safeguarding Report in the Governor information pack.

Karyn McMahon

Personal Development

We are making positive strides in embedding food and nutrition education throughout the curriculum. Abby Tolley has been working alongside the Senior Leadership Team focussing on curriculum integration, developing how food and nutrition can be consistently woven into subjects. This will help students make connections between healthy eating, wellbeing and practical life skills.

Abby has also been raising awareness of ARFID (Avoidant/ Restrictive Food Intake Disorder) and how it can affect our students. A survey went home to parents to gain an understanding of how many of our pupils display difficulties relating to food. The results indicated that 44% of our students are restrictive eaters. Work will continue throughout the summer term to develop supportive strategies and enable progress for these students.

This term students celebrated World Autism Awareness Month, which we combined this year with Wellbeing Week. The week featured a range of activities, including forest school workshops, creative arts projects and physical challenges such as obstacle courses. These activities were designed to build self-esteem, encourage self-advocacy and strengthen peer relationships. One of the highlights of the week was the 'Colour Spectrum' afternoon, where students proudly showcased their individuality and enthusiasm!

Jenny Smith

Behaviour

At Cleaswell Hill School, we work hard to create a calm, structured, and supportive environment that reflects how well we understand the wide range of needs our pupils have. We know that these needs significantly influence how pupils manage their emotions and how they interact with the world around them.

To support this, we focus on building a school culture based on trust, respect and support, with strong, positive relationships between staff and pupils at the heart of

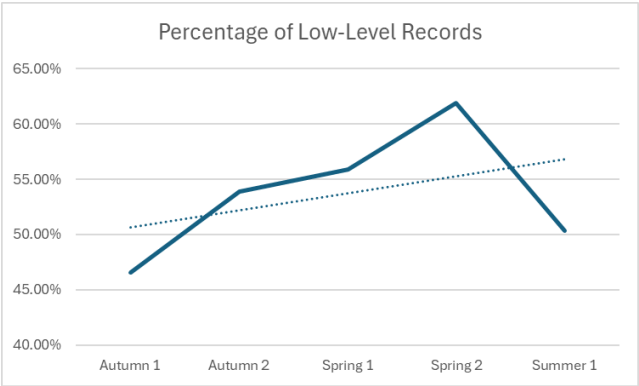
everything we do. These relationships help pupils feel safe, valued and understood, which can ease anxiety and support emotional regulation. When pupils know they're supported by adults who are consistent, kind and understanding, they're more likely to feel confident, stay calm and build the skills they need to cope and thrive.

Staff continue to receive training in NAPPI Levels 1, 2 and 3 to ensure the support they provide is both effective and tailored to each pupil's individual needs. Any incidents that do occur are carefully recorded and monitored using the PBS Cloud system, helping us to track patterns, reflect on practice and maintain a consistent, informed approach across the school.

The table below shows total number of incidents across the whole school.

	Autumn 1 2024 (8 wks)	Autumn 2 2024 (7 wks)	Spring 1 2025 (7 wks)	Spring 2 2025 (6 wks)	Summer 1 2025
Total number of incidents	695	571	955	787	356
Percentage of low-level records	46.6%	53.9%	55.9%	61.9%	50.3%

Analysis of the behaviour data over the five half terms shows a positive overall trend, with an increase in the percentage of low-level incidents compared to total recorded incidents. This suggests that de-escalation strategies are being used effectively to manage behaviour at the agitated and disruptive stages, helping to prevent escalation. However, the most recent data from Summer 1 shows a slight reversal of this trend. While this may be an isolated fluctuation, we will continue to monitor the data closely to ensure that support strategies remain effective and responsive to pupil needs.



There has been one fixed term exclusion during the summer term.

Julie Brown

Therapy

The model of integrated therapy and education at Cleaswell continues to develop in so many positive ways that benefit pupil experience and outcomes.

In May there was a busy week of residential trips, which included a group of 10 pupils with physical needs participating in a fully accessible residential trip to Beamsley House in Skipton. For some of these children, it was their first ever residential. The pupils engaged in life skills such as planning, shopping and cooking. A day trip to Bolton Abbey was a highlight—as was the ice cream! The trip successfully promoted independence, confidence, and real-life application of therapy goals. The hardworking multi-disciplinary staff team included educational staff, OT, SaLT assistant and external professionals to support visual impairment. The success of this trip was a celebration of the incredible children and the close working partnerships within school and with external professionals.

Jo (OT) continues to liaise with parents, carers and NHS professionals to embed therapy within the curriculum and school routines for children with physical needs. Ellie Blackburn, a new NHS OT, is now working into Cleaswell Hill and is being supported through her transition into the school. Planning for September 2025 is underway, focusing on key training for staff around physical needs, epilepsy, urology and gastrostomy care. A multi-agency effort recently enabled the successful return of a pupil following major surgery, reflecting strong partnership working between families, health services and school staff.



Plans are in place to redevelop the large therapy room into a flexible, multi-use area, to enable the delivery of direct sensory integration therapy for pupils who require support for sensory regulation. This involves installation of a bespoke H Frame for swing-based interventions, to support vestibular processing, visual-motor integration and motor planning/organisation. The project is progressing well and aims to be operational in the Autumn Term 2025. Both Jo and Juliet (OTs) are trained in sensory integration and will work closely with therapy assistant/s, providing training to the team, pupil assessment, intervention design and the implementation of protocols/procedures. The multi-use room will continue to be used by NHS physiotherapy and for clinics, vaccinations etc.

Danielle Forsyth (Therapy Assistant) continues to deliver diverse and impactful sessions including group work, physical programs and wellbeing activities at the Appleby Centre. A notable success involves a pupil who has transformed her physical ability and confidence—culminating in entering a powerlifting competition. This case study will be shared with staff to demonstrate the impact of therapeutic support.

Abi McCarthy (Teacher) and Juliet have been developing an implementation approach for the development of pre-writing and handwriting in the junior core pathway. Short, regular, class-based sessions will be included within curriculum and weekly timetables. In these sessions the children will complete activities to develop gross/fine motor skills and sensory processing, as these component skills are required for handwriting. Sessions will also include multi-sensory activities to develop pre-writing skills and letter/number formation. Fran Gall (Therapy Assistant) has provided valuable support, using her therapeutic knowledge to source a wide range of resources, ordering items and storing them systematically.

Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) provision continues to develop positively across all pathways. Amy Shiels (SaLT), is now fully up and running in her role. The current focus continues to be embedding SaLT strategies and approaches into the curriculum, ensuring that teaching activities are pitched at the correct language level.

The therapists have been working closely with the NHS Speech and Language Therapy team to optimise their input, resulting in the NHS leading on some cases and offering direct therapy within the parameters of their service.

Lego Therapy has significantly expanded over the last term, with now 5 groups running across school. We are pleased to have Lauren Dawson (Therapy Assistant) back on timetable within therapy and putting her Lego training to good use. The team are grateful for the significant investment in Lego Therapy.

Rachael Howitt is leading an action-based research project on Gestalt Language Processing (GLP) with Tammy Glen (Class Teacher). Rachael and Amy recently completed a brief training module titled "Gestalt Language Processors in Schools", which helped the SaLTs devise an approach to embed GLP approaches within classrooms.



The Makaton project is continuing at full steam ahead. The Elton John song "I'm Still Standing" (linked to the Spring Term school value of determination) was successfully recorded and shared on Facebook—receiving over 5,800 views and significantly raising the profile of Makaton across the school community. The summer release is coming soon!

Speech and Language Therapy interventions continue across the Core and Extended Pathways. The team continue to develop pre- and post-therapy informal assessment tools to guide and enhance intervention planning, ensuring speech and language support remains targeted and impactful.

The therapy team, including Rachael Ford Hutchinson (Mental Health Lead) continue to work closely with senior leaders and class teams to support children with high needs. There is a strong focus on the identification of activities/strategies to support emotional well-being/regulation, communication, sensory regulation and engagement. Supporting these children requires strong relationships in staff teams and close collaboration with parents/carers and external services, including CYPS and DCT. There is also significant liaison with the Local Authority. Risk assessment and safeguarding issues also require careful consideration. At times of need, children often require a personalised approach and calm, quiet, safe areas for sensory/emotional regulation. Careful planning and creative solutions are necessary to overcome the limitations of the school building and resources available.

Rebound Therapy

This academic year almost 80 students have accessed blocks of rebound therapy. Close collaboration between class teams and rebound staff enables timely, appropriate referrals and sessions that are particularly relevant. Extremely positive results are being achieved with some of the hardest to reach pupils in school.

Additionally, the Rebound team are providing in-house training to a TA (Olivia Greenup) who will be joining the team for 1-2 mornings per week.

The key challenge to expanding the service further is the confines of the school building and lack of a dedicated space for the trampolines to remain assembled, which would significantly improve accessibility and efficiency.

Hydrotherapy

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.

The hydropool timetable has been revised to include a few minutes between sessions to ease congestion and this is working well. John Carruthers (Pool Manager) has reduced his working hours and Ryan Hogg and Sine Rossin are supporting the smooth running of the hydropool, under his guidance.

At present, there are approximately 55 pupils accessing the pool each week with the required high level of staff supervision.

The pool remains popular within the local community and beyond, with some customers travelling from North Tyneside, South Tyneside and County Durham to use our facilities.

Income from hires for the school year, from September 2024 is currently £11,080.

Juliet Ruddick

Parent Partnership

We consider strong partnerships with parents and carers as a vital part of supporting pupil development and wellbeing. Regular communication is maintained

through a variety of channels, including home-school diaries, phone calls, emails, and face-to-face meetings. We actively encourage families to be involved in their child's learning journey, whether through attending review meetings, participating in school events or contributing to personalised planning. This open and collaborative approach helps ensure consistency between home and school, builds trust and allows us to work together to meet each pupil's individual needs effectively.

We support parents and carers with transitions into the new academic year and phase leaders have met with families of pupils who will be joining Cleaswell Hill in September, helping to build early relationships and ensure a smooth start. As part of this ongoing support, the Appleby Centre will also be hosting a Parent Information Evening on June 9th, offering an opportunity for families to learn more, ask questions and feel confident about the journey ahead.

School reports are shared towards the end of the summer term and are an important way of sharing pupil progress, achievements, and areas for development with parents and carers. They are written to reflect each pupil's individual journey, including their academic progress, personal development and social and emotional growth. Staff work collaboratively to ensure reports are accurate, meaningful and supportive, helping families to understand how their child is doing and how they can be further supported at home and in school.

Julie Brown



Admissions

Projections for September 2025 currently stand at 255 pupils with a breakdown of learner groups as follows:

Junior Engagement +	4	Senior Engagement +	7	Total Engagement +	11
Junior Engagement	25	Senior Engagement	17	Total Engagement	42
Junior Core	46	Senior Core	55	Total Core	101
Junior Extended	46	Senior Extended	55	Total Extended	101
Total Junior	121	Total Senior	134	TOTAL	255

We have 12 leavers confirmed for further educational /social care placements. 4 pupils remain on role but are not accessing school. A change of placement has been requested for these pupils, but their complex profiles have meant that it has been difficult to ascertain another placement that could meet need. In the meantime, Karyn McMahon works closely with the EWO, Dawn Westerby, to carry out necessary welfare checks in line with our safeguarding policies and practices. 4 pupils have moved on to other confirmed special placements this year and 2 more pupils are confirmed to start other specialist placements in September 2025.

There are 21 new starters in September 2025 across school mostly in junior phases and 1 starting a Y12 placement. This will involve a robust transition process similar to last year, in which phase leads build close communications with current school staff and families to ensure a smooth integration into Cleaswell. The number of visits is individual depending upon the pupil need and capacity within school.

The availability of adequate space continues to be a significant challenge in meeting the complex needs of certain pupils within our school. We continue to liaise with the Local Authority (LA) to communicate that we are currently operating far beyond our intended capacity.

We continue to receive a high volume of papers requesting a place at Cleaswell. The Admissions team meets every two weeks to 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. We continue to notice a trend in the quality of EHCP paperwork sent to us from other schools and its unreliable accuracy in reflecting the needs of the child described. We therefore ensure that we visit each child before agreeing placement.

We are now receiving papers for placement requests for September 2026. While there are currently some places available, it is important to highlight that we are receiving referrals for children with highly complex needs, including some who are still of nursery age. This makes it extremely challenging to determine whether we will be able to meet their needs effectively, or whether an appropriate peer cohort will be in place at Cleaswell in over a year's time. With this in mind, we are currently starting pupil projections for September 2026-27.

Emma Dunn

Educational Visits

Educational visits continue to play a vital role in enriching our students' learning experiences beyond the classroom. Students from across the school have had the opportunity to take part in residential trips to Daleby House in Beadnell and the Beamsley Project in Skipton. These residential offers a diverse range of activities aimed at developing essential life skills, encouraging independence and fostering social interaction in environments beyond their usual routines. Pupils were able to engage with peers in new contexts, helping to build confidence and adaptability.



Staff who accompanied the trips described the experience as incredibly rewarding, noting how well students embraced the challenges and settled into the new settings. It was particularly encouraging to see pupils thrive outside of their comfort zones, demonstrating resilience, cooperation, and enthusiasm throughout.

Andrew Jackson continues to lead Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions and camping experiences. Through this programme, pupils are given the opportunity to develop a wide range of valuable skills, including map reading, physical fitness, teamwork, initiative, and independence. These experiences also support the development of communication skills and help prepare students for life beyond school. This year we have pupils working towards Bronze and, for the first time, the Gold level of the award. Their participation reflects a strong commitment to personal development, resilience, and growth.

Julie Brown

Performing Arts



This year's summer performance is Rock of Ages and it is MINT!

Performances take place at Platform 1, East Bedlington Community Centre at 6pm on 1st July, 8th July and 15th July. Please contact Lauren if you'd like to attend.

Kirsty Hunter

Development of Outward Facing Partnerships

AET



The Autism Education Trust (AET) training programme continues to be a well-established and adaptable initiative, successfully delivered to a range of audiences across Northumberland. Led by Rachael Howitt, the team remains dedicated to ensuring training is current, engaging, and impactful for delegates. The AET have changed the way that partners can use the training modules, promoting more flexibility.

The AET team have delivered six sessions since the last Governors report, including to a class of student teachers at Northumbria university. Despite the consistently high demand for quality, evidence-based training, uptake has been limited in some areas, potentially due to funding constraints. In response, Cleaswell Hill School continues to offer the *Making Sense of Autism* module free of charge, to promote best practices more widely.

A key ongoing success is the monthly *Making Sense of Autism* training delivered in partnership with the SEN Transport Team at Northumberland County Council. The AET have requested that this piece of work is written up as a Case Study that can be shared with other AET Partners, providing examples of creativity and increasing autism awareness.

World Autism Awareness Month in April 2025 was a great success. The school's Facebook page was filled with resources, tools and links to support autism awareness, reaching a wide audience. A highlight was the Spectrum Colour Day on 30th April, which saw fantastic participation from both staff and pupils.

Training opportunities continue to be promoted via email, Facebook, LinkedIn, the school's website, and—most effectively—by word of mouth. We remain committed to providing high-quality autism training to as many education providers as possible, enhancing understanding, support, and provision across the county.

SEND Advisor



The role of the SEND advisor has remained important for Cleaswell and increasingly popular due to its function in fostering strong, collaborative relationships with County

and providing appropriate information, guidance and support in panel meetings. As funding pressures on education and support services continue to intensify, the SEND advisor acts as a bridge facilitating communication with Cleaswell and other schools, ensuring supportive processes are secured in admissions and promoting inclusive practices in other schools to secure the best outcomes amid tightening budgets. This continues to be a seconded role currently for two days but will be reviewed in September.

Fusion Learning Hub



We have designed a training day where there will be a series of workshops based at Cleaswell for delegates to access as part of a carousel programme. This training day will take place in September and professionals will be invited to buy tickets to attend. Please see further information below to be sent out to SENCos across Northumberland. The places will be limited to 36 delegates (6 per session).

Cleaswell Training Day – September 2025

A Carousel of Specialist Workshops for Education and SEND Professionals

Join us this September at Cleaswell for a dynamic and immersive training day designed for professionals working with children and young people with additional needs. This unique event will feature a **carousel-style programme** of interactive workshops, giving delegates the opportunity to experience a variety of evidence-based approaches and practical strategies.

Participants will rotate through a series of engaging sessions, including:

- **Forest School** – Explore outdoor learning and nature-based development through resources and visuals that provide vestibular input.
- **Attention Autism** – Discover structured, engaging strategies to build attention and communication.
- **Colourful Semantics** – Learn how to support language development through visual sentence building.
- **TACPAC** – Experience sensory communication through touch and music
- **Sensology** – Engage the senses through stimulating activities that promote

sensory processing.

- **Maths with Manipulatives** – Explore practical, hands-on strategies to support mathematical understanding through concrete resources.
- **Intensive Interaction** – Develop early communication skills through responsive, person-centred interaction techniques.

This is a fantastic opportunity to deepen your understanding, gain hands-on experience and connect with like-minded professionals. **Tickets will be available for purchase soon.**

The Cleaswell Hill Outreach Team

In addition to this, Abi McCarthy will be adopting a new role in school on a temporary basis supporting the development of outreach and school support, and a leadership role within the AET Team alongside Rachael Howitt. This will allow us to build capacity within this growth area knowing that there are many schools needing more support and expertise around practical implementation of SEND strategies.

NPQSENCo Facilitation



Staff continue to facilitate the new NPQSENCo award run by the 3 Rivers Teaching School Hub (3RTSH) on behalf of the Ambition Institute. It continues to grow in popularity and there is now a further Spring 2025 cohort being supported in this qualification. The school is reimbursed for any time spent delivering conferences and clinics and best practice continues to be spread within the County. This is a qualification that is compulsory for SENCos and necessary for aspiring SENCos within mainstream schools, however, there has also been an uptake of special school staff undertaking this qualification.

Northumbria University



Two senior staff were asked to deliver two bespoke training sessions to 3rd year teacher trainees in April at their BA conference based on Coach Lane campus. These sessions were based around AET module 'Making Sense of Autism' and 'What does specialist Provision look like?' As part of these sessions, we were able to bring

in practical communication resources which delegates found very helpful, and feedback was extremely positive.

We continue to move forward with the possibility of becoming an MA 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 as part of Masters level qualification. This would form a possible income generation if portioned out as part of the Fusion Hub.

There is an opportunity to co-design the 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.

External Partnerships



As part of our work with two other special schools, we have spent time considering how we can evolve in our literacy and communication strategy. The next steps as part of this will be an audit on Oracy and the use of a standardised reading test that can support teaching and learning on the core and extended pathway. Percy Hedley School have similar strategies around this and we will be sharing our reviews.

Great North Early Years Stronger Practice Hub



The new contract with the Great North Early Years Stronger Practice Hub (GNEYSPH) is currently being reviewed pending the completion of a funding agreement. There have already been positive developments. In May 2025, Abby Tolley, Abi McCarthy, and Rachael Howitt delivered their first webinar for the Hub and received excellent feedback. A special mention goes to Abby Tolley, who delivered her first-ever training session with confidence and deep subject knowledge in her role as Food and Nutrition Lead.

The six commissioned training sessions with Wise Academies (originally arranged through the Great North Stronger Practice Hub) will be delivered once funding is confirmed and venue is agreed. The GNEYSPH has been very complimentary of the training previously carried out by the school and looking forward to working further with us in the future.

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

Diary Dates for 2024-25

Summer 2025

Value - Resilience

Training Day	28 April
Governor Resource Management Committee Meeting	28 April
Health and Wellbeing Week	28 April
Spectrum Colour Day	30 April
Residential Visits – Beamsley and Daleby House	12 May
Commuted Hours 5/6	14 May
Census	15 May
Coffee Morning	17 May
Governor Monitoring Visit – Food and Nutrition	21 May
Non-Uniform Day	23 May
End of Half Term	23 May

Value - Respect

Governor Monitoring Visit – Safeguarding	4 June
Governor Resource Management Committee Meeting	6 June
Governor Strategic Policy & Direction Committee Meeting	6 June
Governor Monitoring Visit - PE	10 June
SIP Visit	16 June
Governor Monitoring Visit – Integrated Therapy	18 June
World Culture Week	23 June
Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award	23 June
Commuted Hours 6/6	25 June
Summer Term Full Governing Body Meeting	30 June
Action Based Research Project Feedback	2 July
Reports to Parents/Carers	4 July
Great North 10K	6 July
Sports Week	7 July
Leavers Prom - Platform One	7 July
Family Picnic	11 July
Leavers Assembly	14 July
Leavers Prom – Main Site	15 July
Non-Uniform Day	18 July
End of Academic Year	18 July

