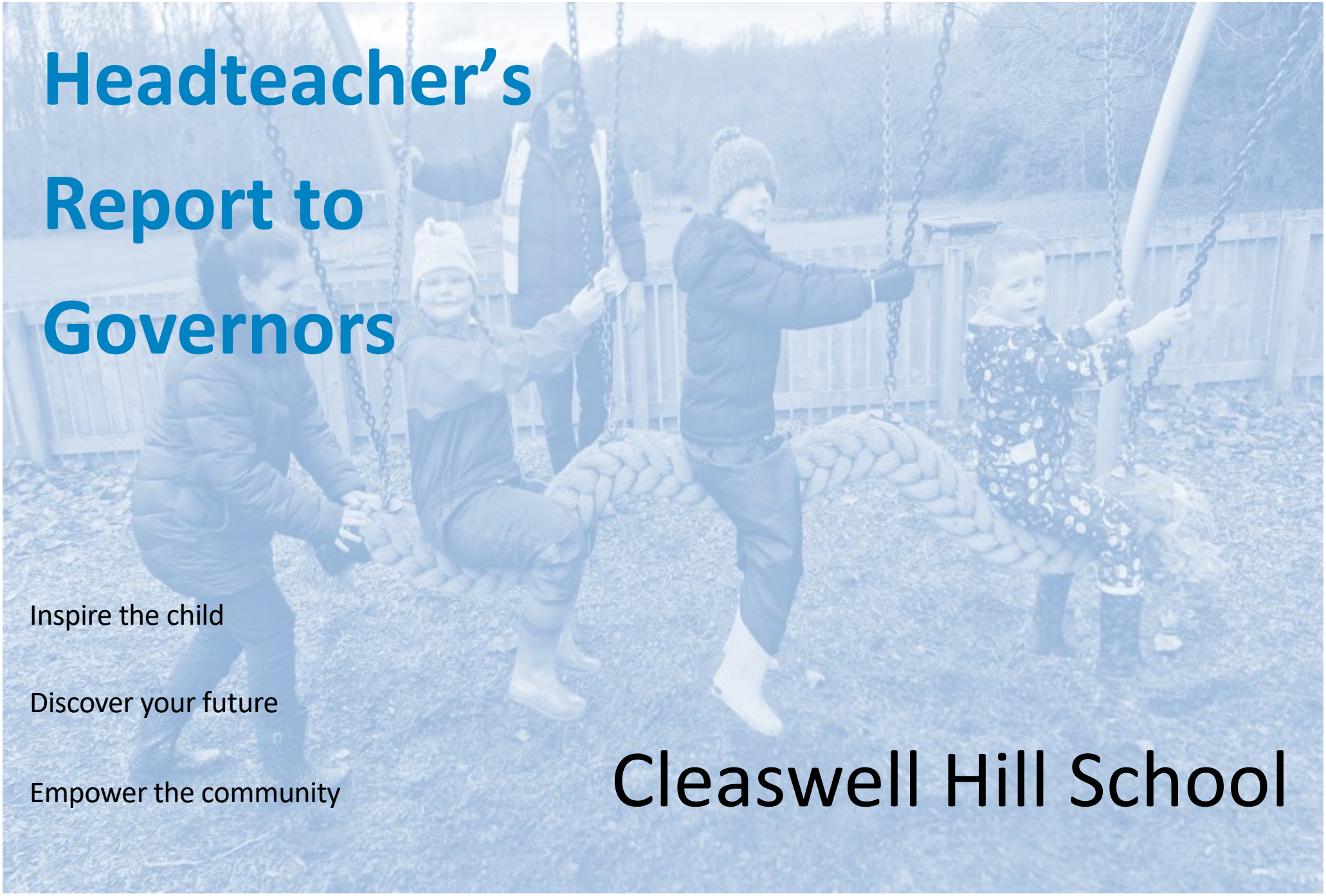
Headteacher's Report to Governors



Inspire the child

Discover your future

Empower the community

Cleaswell Hill School

Life in fast forward

It is almost nine years since I became Headteacher of Cleaswell Hill School, six years since the start of the Covid pandemic and nearly four years since our last Ofsted inspection—where did the time go? It's as if someone has pressed the fast forward button on the remote so we are running at x4. Add to this working in a school that is more like five or six schools rolled into one and the fast forward button is pressed again.

There is a rational explanation; as you age, each year becomes a smaller proportion of your life, giving the impression of time speeding up. Deep focus reduces self-awareness and time monitoring, not having time to be bored and cognitive load also contributes to 'time flying'.

Slow and steady wins the race

The cliché above doesn't quite work at Cleaswell. Each term is a marathon with periodic sprints thrown in when you least expect it, which means that working at Cleaswell Hill School requires a different pace. This has definitely become more intense over the last five years, with more responsibility directed towards schools, alongside increasing complexity of need. It is also slightly frustrating working with other services and organisations whose 'hare' is our 'tortoise'.

The long-awaited white paper, along with the 'new' Ofsted framework, were both a bit of an anti-climax and haven't brought many surprises or answers. The white paper shows we were ahead of the curve in many ways:

- Specialist expertise supporting mainstream inclusion (Fusion): there will be an expectation that specialist settings support mainstream through outreach and short-term/targeted support. √
- Inclusion as core practice, not an add-on: the reforms put heavy emphasis on consistent inclusive practice and building shared expectations/ standards. √
- Meeting increasingly complex needs locally (right support / right place) admissions process, getting children into the right pathways and hopefully minimising friction for families. √
- Joined-up working across education, health and care: we have heavily invested time into developing good relationships and links with many services which will be increasingly important in the future. √
- Continuous development of provision (quality and consistency): see the rest of this report. √

The new Ofsted framework is really the same as the old one but, from my understanding, you are asked if 'are you alright?' a few more times. Perhaps this is a little cynical as there is the new 'Inclusion' area. This is an important area of accountability for mainstream schools where special needs provision can be inconsistent, but it is our bread and butter. The rest of this report is littered with examples of how we continue to develop our provision to ensure we meet the needs of our pupils as best as possible.

It is unfortunate that the opportunity wasn't taken to recognise that a one size fits all approach isn't the way forward and that special schools should be judged, by people who are in a position to judge, on how well they address the four areas of need (five if you include preparation for adulthood) in the pupils' EHCP. It doesn't take an expert to see that how well we support a child's development in 'cognition and learning' would be a better indicator of our effectiveness across

the ability range of the school than our proficiency in history teaching and learning. The pupil's EHCP is the reason why the pupil is in a specialist setting so it should be central to the inspection process. A missed opportunity, but unfortunately another example of special schools being shoehorned into a mainstream model - not very inclusive!

I'm conscious that this next year and a half is going to go by incredibly fast. For me personally I can almost see the finish line, but I don't intend it to be a slow finish—I'm aiming for a sustained sprint along the home straight. There is plenty to sort in this period of transition, which we are already onto, and I suspect it will feel like the fast forward button has been pressed once again.

Mike Jackson, March 26

Section 1 - School Development

Whole School Targets (WSTs)

Our whole school targets for 2025-26 are:

Leadership and Governance

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

Curriculum and Teaching

High-quality, ambitious and coherently planned curricula based on strong foundational learning that inclusively meet the needs of all pupils.

Consistently exceptional teaching delivered by confident, deliberate practitioners.

Achievement

Pupils achieve highly positive outcomes through secure foundational knowledge, personalised progress tracking and preparation for future education, training, or employment.

Attendance and Behaviour

Attendance tracking and monitoring enables successful strategies which support maintained/improved attendance for individuals and pupil groups including severely absent, persistently absent and disadvantaged (FSM).

All staff have the insight and tools to impact positively on pupils' lives.

Inclusion

To embed a culture of equity, ambition and belonging for every learner.

Personal Development

Promote holistic personal development to cultivate confident, safe and enriched learners, integrating sustainability, civic engagement and enrichment opportunities to enhance understanding and expand horizons.

Ofsted

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

Overview of the New Ofsted Inspection Framework

The new Education Inspection Framework introduces significant structural and focus changes. From November 2025, all schools – including special schools – will be evaluated across several distinct areas, with each area graded on a five-point scale rather than a single overall grade.

Five-point scale:
• Exceptional
• Strong standard
• Expected standard
• Needs attention
• Urgent improvement

Evaluation areas:

- Safeguarding (met / not met)
- Inclusion
- Curriculum & Teaching
- Achievement
- Attendance & Behaviour
- Personal Development & Well-being
- Leadership & Governance
- Early Years
- Post 16

School Improvement Partner (SIP)

Lynn Watson has been in school working with school leaders for five days (at the time of writing) this term. The spring SIP day will be on 17th March.

Section 2 - Curriculum

Curriculum and Teaching

Ofsted replaced the old school inspection handbook with a fully renewed set of inspection toolkits and operating guides starting on 10 November 2025, becoming the basis for all routine inspections from January 2026.

The new inspection framework includes a dedicated, expanded section on Curriculum and Teaching that outlines the evidence inspectors must gather and how they evaluate curriculum quality and teaching effectiveness.

What Inspectors focus on:

- Ambitious, coherent curriculum covering statutory requirements, sequenced with clear end-points

- Effective curriculum delivery: strong subject knowledge, clear explanations, systematic checking of understanding
- Inclusive design & implementation for SEND and disadvantaged pupils
- Evidence-informed teaching drawing on high-quality research and internal/external evidence

How Inspectors gather evidence:

- Professional conversations, learning walks, lesson visits and observed practice
- Review of existing school documents
- Triangulation: pupils, staff, curriculum materials, teaching practice

Key Framework changes affecting this area:

- New 5-point grading scale and report card format
- Inclusion becomes a standalone judgement
- Curriculum & Teaching forms a core part of the new expanded evaluation areas

What Schools must demonstrate:

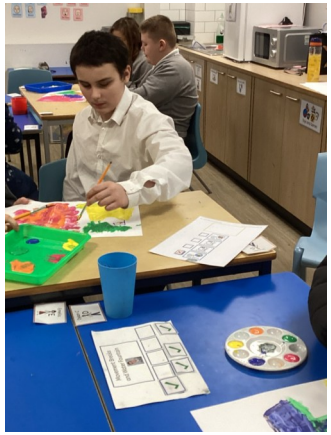
- Clear curriculum maps showing sequencing and progression
- Consistent, evidence-based teaching approaches school-wide
- Strong subject expertise across staff and purposeful Professional Development Programme
- Systems that identify & remove barriers to learning for SEND/ disadvantaged learners

Our response:

A culture of curriculum does not arise spontaneously. It is the emergent property of a school with intelligent and genuine curriculum focussed leadership.

An exceptional curriculum cannot be bought in for pupils with complex needs. At Cleaswell Hill, School Leaders have designed and created a curriculum narrative that is growing organically from our pupil cohort. It is needs-led, responsive and inclusive, grows from pupils' strengths, reflects evaluated educational research and SEND best practice and remains aligned with statutory elements such as Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and Careers Education Information and Guidance (CEIAG).

It aims to be broad, balanced, progressive and sequential. This offer draws on external evidence-based resources, eg. National Curriculum, Ofsted Subject Reviews, Diversity Equality Inclusion (DEI) lens, curriculum theorists and cognitive science to ensure exceptionality across the wide-ranging pupil cohort.



Every pupil follows a learner-driven curriculum, shaped by detailed profiling (EHCP/ PLIM) in communication, physical, social/emotional wellbeing, engagement support and functional skills.

Integrated therapy ensures all teaching is individualised, flexible and highly relevant.

We work together as a school community to design and deliver a constantly evolving relevant curriculum, based on data-analysis and feedback, with a clear purpose that is understood by learners (as appropriate), their families, staff and our local community.

Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are inextricably linked. When the best of these is brought together well, they form the essence of effective education.

The Professional Development approach at Cleaswell Hill is a research-informed Theory of Change designed to improve teaching quality and strengthen outcomes for all pupils. Professional development is treated as a strategic, whole-school process that promotes reflective practice, shared language, collaborative inquiry and evidence-based decision-making.

Cleaswell Hill is committed to fostering a professional learning culture where staff regularly evaluate teaching and learning. Professional development is planned, struc-

tured, and aligned with whole-school priorities identified through rigorous diagnostic processes that use internal and external data sources. Teachers take an active role in selecting priorities, ensuring relevance and ownership.

Professional development is intentionally balanced across four core mechanisms: building knowledge, motivating staff, developing teaching techniques and embedding practice (Education Endowment Fund). This ensures development is not a one-off event but an ongoing cycle of learning and refinement.

Teaching is technically very difficult (novice to expert). The discipline of teaching teachers (didagogy) is challenging.

It is important to identify the right priorities for best outcomes. School Leaders have created a high-quality Professional Learning and Development Programme, based on evidence-informed principles in the design and delivery of coherent adult learning.

We look forward to sharing our approach to Curriculum and Teaching in more detail with Ofsted inspectors.

Karyn McMahon

Assessment

The spring term has seen class groups begin to collate and upload evidence towards EHCP targets using Earwig and staff have engaged in professional discussions regarding the content of a written observation and how factual information is crucial in showing progress towards targets. Staff have worked hard to input all the EHCP targets onto the assessment system and these will be assessed before the end of the spring term.

The engagement pathway will now assess EHCP targets on a yearly basis, rather than termly like the core and extended pathways. This will highlight the smaller steps of progress and allow more incidental learning moments to be tracked. It also allows staff to see patterns over time and will generate a more accurate picture of a child's development towards their specific targets. Staff feedback on this method has been extremely positive so far and the build up of evidence within the engagement pathway is exceptional.

The core and extended pathways will continue to use a RAG rating system to assess termly targets and build up an evidence portfolio to support these judgements.

One major benefit to using an online assessment system is the ability to analyse data almost immediately. The previous system required individual analysis of progress reports which was time consuming. We can now extract data from Earwig for a range of different purposes, across a multitude of frameworks. We can also create comparative data by characteristics such as pupil premium or cared for children.

"Evidence informs the school's approach to assessment; for example, assessment is used to help pupils embed and use knowledge fluently, to check understanding and inform teaching, or to understand different starting points and gaps."

(OFSTED, State-funded school inspection toolkit, 2025)

PLIM Targets (EHCP)

Across the autumn term, within the core and extended pathways, exactly 75% of PLIM targets were met. The breakdown of this by area is:

- Communication & Interaction – 80%
- Cognition & Learning – 74%
- SEMH – 69%
- Sensory and/or Physical – 77%

Whilst this is a termly snippet of data, it represents an increase in the communication & interaction and sensory and/or physical figures.

This data was then further scrutinised and analysed by phase. The main area of strength within each pathway was:

- Junior Core - Cognition & Learning – 69%
- Senior Core – Communication & Interaction – 100%
- Extended - Communication & Interaction – 82%
- Appleby Centre – Communication & Interaction, SEMH, Sensory and/or Physical – 84%

The main area for development within each phase was:

- Junior Core - SEMH – 66%
- Senior Core – Cognition & Learning – 62%
- Extended - SEMH – 64%
- Appleby Centre – Cognition & Learning – 80%

Moderation will take place on Tuesday 17 March. The agenda will include discussion of evidence, assessing targets and logistics around uploaded records.

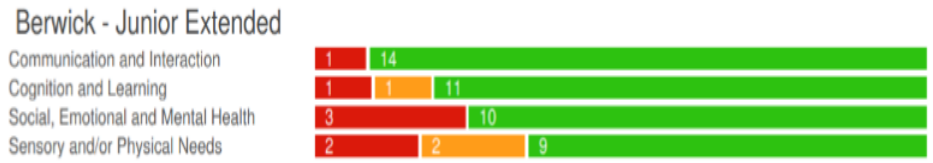
Pupil Premium

OFSTED take particular care in "gathering evidence on the progress over time of disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being". Our ability to extract comparative data by pupil premium and cared for children demonstrates this focus. Our pupil premium cohort have achieved 74.25% of their PLIM targets, a small percentage behind the whole school cohort. The data is further broken down as follows:

- Communication & Interaction – 78%
- Cognition & Learning – 78%
- SEMH – 67%
- Sensory and/or Physical – 74%

Data Analysis

This is how data can be represented on Earwig – including split by class and by chosen cohort.



Template 3	Interim targets	Not met	Working towards	Met	% Completed
Communication and Interaction	78	5	9	64	82%
Cognition and Learning	70	5	11	54	77%
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	74	5	22	47	64%
Sensory and/or Physical Needs	77	3	15	59	77%

Next steps

- Assessment of core National Curriculum subjects on Earwig
- Addition of Launching into framework onto Earwig
- Moderation feedback in formal SLT meeting
- Phase leaders to give action points to autumn PLIM data

Jamie Wheadon

Phonics and Spelling Provision – Whole School Overview

Phonics and spelling are delivered systematically across the school, with phonics sessions taking place four times a week and spelling three times a week. Groupings are informed by termly assessment data to ensure targeted and effective teaching. Children transition to their classrooms at 9:20am in preparation for their sessions. All

staff delivering phonics and spelling are fully trained in the ELS (Essential Letters and Sounds) programme, ELS spelling and Essential spelling and word knowledge, ensuring consistency and pace across all groups.

Currently, the school runs nine phonics groups and six spelling groups. The ELS spelling programme covers content from the Year 2 National Curriculum, while the *Essential* Spelling and Word Knowledge programme is used to deliver content from Years 3 to 6.

Four classes in junior core are trialling a multisensory approach to teaching phonics to promote engagement and support need during these sessions. This has been discussed with Tara (author of ELS) and supported by myself, the pathway lead and phase leader. Sessions are planned and resourced to deliver an immersive experience with each day focussing upon different skills e.g. recognition, oral blending, blending etc and linking to written output in the afternoon sessions.

Phonics and spelling remain high-profile areas within the school. Regular modelling of lessons takes place, and staff are given opportunities to observe best practice and have sessions modelled within their own classrooms. I continue to lead external training for other schools and deliver EVOLVE days, which include lesson observations, data analysis and the setting of improvement targets for senior leadership teams, as well as whole-school training.

Assessment of Phonics and Spelling

Phonics and spelling assessments continue to take place in the fifth week of each half term. Staff are confident in using this data accurately to identify and address gaps in learning before the holidays, ensuring that no gaps are left in learning. The assessment data informs planning and supports teachers in maintaining a strong pace of learning across all groups.

In addition to guiding planning, the data is used to form and adjust groupings, ensuring children are placed where they are most likely to make academic progress—while still considering their age, developmental stage and learning behaviours. Assessment outcomes are also used to identify children in need of targeted interventions, including support for grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPC), oral blending, and blending for reading.

67 children accessed daily phonics last term. 22 of these children are going to trial the multisensory approach across 4 groups.

31 children working within ELS year 2 spelling programme and 42 pupils working within the Year 3 *Essential Spelling and Word Knowledge* Programme made progress on the spelling programme, although progress varied among individuals. Those who made only a little progress are currently receiving additional support through a spelling intervention delivered by our intervention TA throughout the spring term.

68 children across the school are currently accessing the ELS Phonics Programme, 23 are using the ELS Year 2 Spelling Programme, and 46 pupils are working within the Year 3 *Essential Spelling and Word Knowledge* Programme on the main site with 2 additional classes at the Appleby Centre.

Helen Moulton

Academic Interventions – Autumn 2025 and Spring Term 2026

During the first half of the Autumn term, we successfully delivered 6 academic interventions to a total of 15 pupils. These sessions were facilitated by our in-house intervention teaching assistant and took place in the therapy cabin. Each intervention was delivered on a one-to-one basis or within a small group, with pupils receiving between two and four sessions per week, depending on their individual needs.

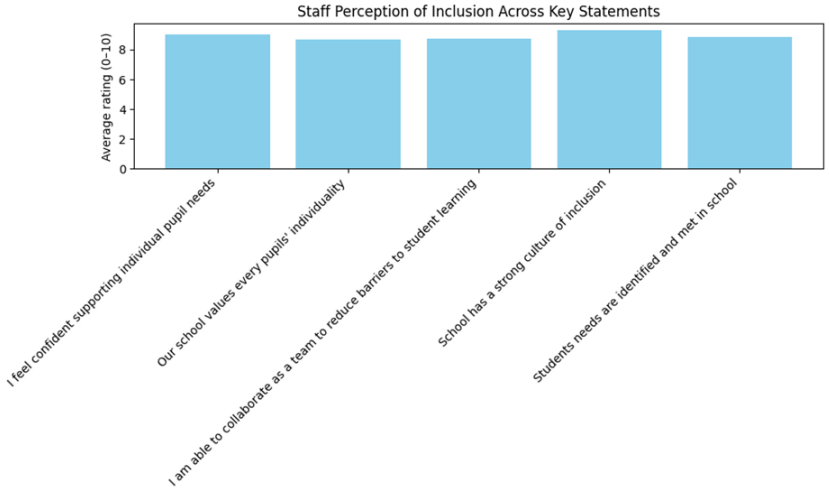
Unfortunately, during the second half of the Autumn term, interventions were unable to be delivered, the children currently on these interventions will continue into the Spring term. We have been able to add sessions to the timetable; therefore, 19 children will have interventions in the Spring term accessing 8 different interventions.

Helen Moulton

Inclusion at Cleaswell Hill School

Cleaswell Hill School places inclusion at the heart of its culture, curriculum, and environment. We support pupils with a wide range of complex needs and are commit-

ted to ensuring every learner can experience equity, belonging and ambition. Our Inclusion Approach emphasises a nurturing, respectful ethos where relationships, emotional wellbeing and high expectations guide daily practice. We recently carried out a review of staff understanding of inclusion led by phase leads and captured the following results:



Staff describe inclusion with words such as together, belonging, equity, respect, and accessibility, showing a shared values-driven understanding of what inclusion means. Confidence levels are high; staff rate their understanding of inclusion at an average of 4.18/5.

Perceptions of whole school inclusion are extremely positive, averaging 8.91/10 across statements, with particularly strong agreement that the school has a strong inclusive culture, values every pupil's individuality and meets individual needs effectively. This will now link into our consideration of a shared vision for staff in understanding what inclusion looks like at Cleaswell Hill School.

Emma Dunn

Early Career Teacher (ECT) Programme at Cleaswell Hill School

Cleaswell Hill School is proud to offer an outstanding Early Career Teacher (ECT) programme, consistently recognised through lesson observations, School Improvement Partner (SIP) feedback, and quality assurance visits from our appropriate body, *The Three Rivers*. Our programme is designed to build a resilient, highly skilled teaching

workforce capable of delivering exceptional teaching and learning.

Through high-quality mentoring, expert modelling and carefully tailored target-setting, we ensure that ECTs are supported not only in their professional development but also in maintaining their mental health and wellbeing. This holistic approach helps maximise teacher effectiveness, ensuring they have a meaningful and lasting impact on pupil outcomes.

Over the past four years, nine teachers have successfully completed their two-year ECT induction at Cleaswell Hill. As of January 2026, all nine have remained at the school as confident, capable and empowered educators—an outstanding retention rate that reflects the strength of our programme and the supportive environment we provide.

We currently have five ECTs on roll—two in their first year and three in their second—each benefiting from a rich and varied development experience. ECTs are encouraged to engage with a wide range of approaches and are supported in taking informed, reflective risks that develop their confidence, capacity and teaching expertise.

"ECTs are mentored by a highly successful leader who models exceptional outcomes and builds reflective practice through mentoring and coaching." — *Lynn Watson, School Improvement Partner (2024)*

Our commitment to mentoring, regular observations and bespoke support is central to our mission of delivering high-quality education. By investing in the development of early career teachers, we are embedding a culture of continuous improvement,

innovation, and educational excellence across the school.

Helen Moulton

Section 3- Staffing and Finance

Pupil Statistics

	F	M	Total
Alnwick - Junior Extended	6	6	12
Berwick - Junior Extended	7	7	14
Blossom - Junior Core	2	8	10
Bluebell - Senior Core	3	7	10
Bramble - Senior Core	10	1	11
Clover - Senior Core	4	6	10
Corbridge - Senior Extended	3	12	15
Doves - Junior Engagement+	1	4	5
Hexham - Senior Extended	5	9	14
Juniper - Junior Core	1	6	7
Kielder - Junior Extended	0	11	11
Ladybirds - Junior Engagement	1	6	7
Lapwing - Senior Engagement	2	6	8
Maple - Junior Core	3	6	9
Montane - Senior Extended	1	12	13
Morpeth - Junior Extended	0	11	11
Oak - Junior Core	3	8	11
Otters - Junior Engagement	1	5	6
Owls - Junior Engagement	3	4	7
Phoenix - Senior Extended	6	11	17
Puffins - Junior Engagement	1	6	7
Riverside - Senior Core	2	9	11
Sanderling - Senior Engagement	1	7	8
Starlings - Senior Engagement+	0	9	9
Thistle - Senior Core	1	10	11
Willow - Junior Core	4	5	9
Total	71	192	263

	F	M	Total
Year 1	3	5	8
Year 2	2	6	8
Year 3	2	5	7
Year 4	6	13	19
Year 5	5	15	20
Year 6	6	12	18
Year 7	10	27	37
Year 8	10	31	41
Year 9	7	20	27
Year 10	4	27	31
Year 11	9	18	27
Year 12	1	10	11
Year 13	6	3	9
Total	71	192	263

Staffing

As of February 27th, Cleaswell Hill School employs 176 staff across 169 permanent and 7 fixed-term contracts. During the spring term, we experienced a turnover of 5 leavers and recruited 4 new staff members.

Staff absence continues to present significant operational and financial challenges. Absence figures for the spring term show 49 days lost for class leads and 309 days for support staff, placing considerable pressure on our resources, budget and ability to maintain consistent provision for our pupils. We are actively monitoring this situation and exploring strategies to improve staff wellbeing and reduce absence levels.

Julie Brown

Budget Overview

The Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) was completed, circulated to the Full Governing Body and submitted to Northumberland County Council on 21 January 2026.

The school is currently awaiting confirmation of the date for the 2026-2027 budget meeting with Northumberland County Council. The Service Level Agreements (SLAs) provided by Northumberland County Council have been ordered in preparation for the budget meeting. Following the meeting, the budget will be reviewed and approved by the Resource Management Committee and a summary circulated to the Full Governing Body.

The Department for Education has published its pay award recommendations to the School Teacher's Review Body, including a 6.5% cumulative pay rise to be implemented over the 2026-2027, 2027-2028 and 2028-2029 academic years. No additional funding has been announced; the department forecasts that schools will be able to afford an overall pay increase of 2.7% over the next two years. The teacher pay award was 5.5% for 2024-2025 and 4% for 2025-2026. If accepted, the pay award would take effect from September 2026.

The NJC have submitted a pay claim for support staff members for 2026-2027 featuring an increase of at least £3,000 or 10%, whichever is greater, across all NJC spinal column points, a £15 minimum hourly rate, a two hour reduction in the working week, an additional day of annual leave, the ability for school support staff to take one day of paid leave during term time and the abolition of the level one teaching assis-

tant role. 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 2025-2026 pay award for support staff featured an increase of 3.2%. If accepted, the pay award would apply from April 2026.

The current Cleaswell Hill School staffing structure was reviewed by the Resource Management Committee on 6 March 2026.

The DfE financial benchmarking tool has generated a report that compares the school's expenditure with twenty nine similar schools for the 2024-2025 financial year; this was analysed by the Resource Management Committee on 6 March 2026 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 expenditure on contracts and aids the budget setting process. The Resource Management Committee reviewed the contracts log on 6th March 2026.

A recent school report summary sheet has 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 Robin Hood by M&M Productions in the school hall on 23rd October as a result of generous donations from Happy Days Children's Charity (registered charity number 1010943) and Cleaswell Hill Foundation. The Junior Extended Pathway hosted an outdoor forest school afternoon for parents and carers during the month of October and raised £48.68 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation. The Cleaswell Hill School class pumpkin competition and Halloween non-uniform day on 24 October raised £64.50 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation. Cleaswell Hill School pupils were very excited to receive the delivery of a giant Lego bus sculpture during the month of October, generously donated by Fenwick Newcastle Upon Tyne. We were delighted to receive a grant of £1,917.51 from the Co-op Local Community Fund this month towards exciting, inclusive music therapy resources for the children that attend Cleaswell Hill School.

Our school photograph day on 3 November raised a fantastic £213.34 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation. Cleaswell Hill School pupils wore yellow, spots or stripes throughout a non-uniform day on 14 November and raised £98.62 in aid of BBC Children in Need (registered charity number 802052). The Cleaswell Hill Foundation trustees met on 20 November and ratified the charity policies and constitution.

The Christmas fair held at The Appleby Centre on 2 December raised a fantastic £1,044.78 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation. The Core Pathway Christmas enterprise event featuring lots of crafts made by Cleaswell Hill School pupils on 8 December generated £521.96 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation. The Junior Engagement Pathway Christmas event raised £44.50 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation this month and Oak Class hosted a lemonade stall which resulted in £49.41 towards a class cinema visit. The Christmas Market held at the Cleaswell Hill School main site on 9th December raised an amazing £2,457.28 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation. The Cleaswell Hill School Christmas performances at East Bedlington Community Centre/Platform 1 were a phenomenal success and

raised £1,658.54 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation to be utilised towards performing arts resources and experiences. Santa and his sleigh generously visited Cleaswell Hill School with The Morpeth Lions on 16 December and kindly provided a selection box for all pupils. Our Christmas non-uniform day on 19 December raised £38.60 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation. £40.50 was generated via sales of Christmas cards designed by Cleaswell Hill School pupils and an art raffle produced £163.47 in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation this month. Cleaswell Hill Foundation greatly appreciated kind donations of £1,000 from T. James Ltd (Bedlington), £100 from Mr Berg, £19.01 from Piramal, £95 towards an online Singing Hands performance for the school and a grant of £1,000 from The Rothley Trust towards OT resources during the month of December.

Cleaswell Hill Foundation gratefully received a legacy donation of £407 from the funeral collection for a long term supporter of the school and charity during the month of January.

Our links with Just Giving, Your School Lottery, Stikins, Paypal Giving, Empties Please, 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 Travellers Rest raised £31.50, our link with Stikins generated £65.52, our local community collection box at The Cherry Tree Bar and Grill raised £309.44, our link with Easyfundraising generated £17.66, our local community collection box at Financially Sound raised £64.82, our link with Empties Please resulted in £12.50 and our lottery generated £682.60 from October 2025 – January 2026.

Our future planned fundraising events for this term include a non-uniform day on 20 March in aid of Comic Relief (registered charity number 326568) and a non-uniform day on 2 April in aid of Cleaswell Hill Foundation.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Lauren Caisley

Section 4 - Specific Issues

Safeguarding

As always, we continue to be aware of the evolving safeguarding landscape in order to be responsive to statutory changes and ensure that our pupils are well informed through the curriculum offer and supported within our provision to keep themselves safe.

There are always annual updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), the statutory safeguarding guidance for schools in England, however, this year's proposals- if all are instated- will bring more change than usual.

Link Governors met with DSL's and the Mental Health Lead on 4 March (Monitoring Report shared with Governors) to discuss the recently published aspects of KCSIE to consider the updates currently open to sector consultation, due to become statutory requirements from 1 September 2026. We cross-referenced their representation and inclusion in the curriculum and broader aspects of school practice, policy and procedures.

Summary of proposed changes to KCSIE guidance;

Gender-Questioning Children*

- Guidance now formally included within statutory safeguarding

- Parents must be involved in the vast majority of cases unless a specific safeguarding risk is identified
- Schools must record biological sex accurately on all records
- No exceptions for biological-sex-based single-sex spaces (toilets, changing rooms, residential accommodation)

*It is worth noting that school has concerns regarding the language used within the policy for children and young people relating to social transition. We have a duty to provide a way for all of our learners to be heard and supported and ensure that no child is exposed, unseen or vulnerable as a response to safeguarding advice. See Governor Monitoring Report for details.

Strengthened Role of the DSL

- Expanded responsibilities around child-on-child abuse, harassment and violence, including knife crime
- DSLs must demonstrate skills and experience, not only seniority

Part One/Annex A

- Annex A removed – summary version no longer available
- Every staff member must read the full Part One

Online Safety, AI & Emerging Risks

- AI-generated deepfake images/videos now included in child-on-child abuse definitions
- Updated terminology:
  "Consensual and non-consensual self-generated intimate images/videos, including those created with AI."
- Stronger references to misogyny and harmful sexual behaviour

Attendance, Early Help & Vulnerability Indicators

- Pupils repeatedly removed from class or on part-time timetables identified as potential safeguarding concerns
- Increased emphasis on community-based Early Help

Transitions Between Schools

- Better early sharing of safeguarding information when pupils transfer schools

No guidance is yet available as to how these proposed changes are to be implemented, for example, what schools are to do to ensure better sharing of safeguarding information on transition. We have experience of requesting information and being informed by childrens social care that without parental consent, safeguarding information may not be shared.

DSL's will;

- Stay aware that these changes are proposed and may evolve
- Refresh our understanding of online harms, including AI-generated content
- Allocate staff time to read Part One in full once final guidance is published
- Consider implications for the curricula and work alongside Curriculum Leads to changes in the safeguarding landscape are reflected in curriculum content
- Collaborate with the Environments Group regarding compliance with up-to-date guidance on children who are questioning their gender, particularly in relation to toilet facilities

Karyn McMahon, Helen McIntyre

Attendance

Under the revised Ofsted Framework (effective from November 2025), pupil attendance is now evaluated as an indicator of how included, supported and safe pupils feel in school, rather than simply a numerical measure. Inspectors examine a school's culture, systems and pupils' lived experiences, expecting leaders to understand the underlying reasons for absence and to demonstrate early, proactive intervention. Schools must be able to show how they identify emerging patterns quickly and take timely, effective action. Ofsted will focus on the barriers influencing attendance—the "pushes and pulls"—and will pay particular attention to pupils who are Children Missing Education (CME) and those on part-time timetables.

To support this approach, the six key areas identified by the Education Endowment Foundation as underpinning effective attendance practice are woven into our strategic intent.

Build a culture that promotes attendance:
Attendance is embedded within the school's ethos, curriculum design and daily practice, with clear messaging that every day matters, while recognising individual pupil needs.

Develop clear, consistent policies and systems:
Attendance expectations and responses are transparent, lawful, SEND-informed

and applied consistently across the school.

Use data to understand patterns and direct support:
Attendance data is used diagnostically to identify reasons for absence and to trigger early, targeted support.

Build strong relationships with families:
We work in partnership with families, framing attendance as a supportive process rather than a punitive one.

Target support early using a graduated response:
Concerns are addressed promptly through a graduated and SEND-appropriate approach.

Work with external partners and agencies:
Attendance improvement is strengthened through coordinated multi-agency collaboration.

Attendance data is routinely shared with phase leaders and termly meetings are held to review pupils causing concern and to plan appropriate interventions and strategies.

Our current overall attendance is 89%, compared with 88.57% reported in the autumn term. The latest data available shows the national attendance rate for state-funded special schools in England to be at 87.1%.

It's important to note that overall attendance being broadly in line with national averages or showing an improving trend over time is part of the 'expected standard' criteria. However, for special schools with complex pupil needs, inspectors will focus on the specific barriers our pupils face and the effectiveness of our interventions, rather than purely comparing us to national averages.

Due to the complex and wide-ranging needs within our cohort, we may, in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Head Teacher, implement a temporary reduced timetable when it is in a pupil's best interests. We currently have eight pupils on these timetables. These arrangements are used as a supportive measure for pupils who are finding full-time attendance difficult, either for safety reasons or because of medical needs and in full agreement with parents. The Local Authority, CYPS and the Disabled Children's Team are kept fully informed and involved throughout.

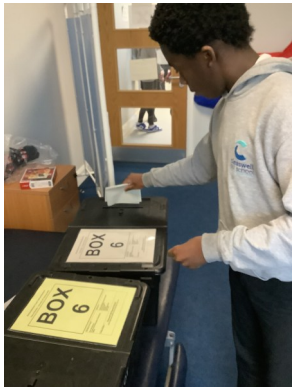
We currently have 11 pupils on our CME monitoring list, including one pupil receiving education through short-term alternative provision arrangements and one pupil in the process of transitioning between settings. All cases are actively monitored with regular contact maintained and appropriate agencies involved.

Julie Brown

Personal Development

This term, pupils across the school have shown strong progress in their personal development through a wide range of opportunities designed to build confidence, communication, wellbeing and a sense of belonging. Two key areas of focus were our continued work on democracy and pupil voice and our whole-school involvement in Children's Mental Health Week.

As part of our partnership with the Local Authority Participation Team, pupils took part in the Northumberland Youth Elections. This experience deepened their understanding of democratic processes, representation, and active citizenship. Through discussions, focus groups and participation in the voting process, pupils further developed skills such as communication, confidence and an awareness of civic responsibility.



In February, the whole school participated in Children's Mental Health Week, exploring the theme "This Is My Place." Across all phases, pupils engaged in discussions, wellbeing activities and creative tasks that encouraged them to reflect on where they feel safe, valued and connected. Resources were also shared with families and the wider community to help extend this learning beyond school.

Together, these experiences, alongside our ongoing day-to-day provision, have contributed to a positive term for personal development, offering pupils meaningful opportunities to express their voice, build resilience and strengthen their connection to both school and community.

This term, our curriculums have also been further adapted to support pupils' person-

al development in ways that best meet individual needs. Within the core pathway in particular, there has been a strong focus on developing essential life skills and functional independence, with pupils given regular opportunities to apply these skills in real-life contexts. Pupils have also been supported to explore their identity, build positive relationships and deepen their understanding of community. The continued use of hands-on, cross-curricular learning has fostered curiosity, resilience and confidence, contributing to pupils' social, emotional and academic growth throughout the term.

Jenny Smith

Behaviour

From April 2026, updated DfE guidance on the use of restrictive physical intervention and reasonable force will come into effect. The Physical Intervention Policy has been revised in preparation for these forthcoming changes and will be fully implemented from April 2026

Key revisions include:

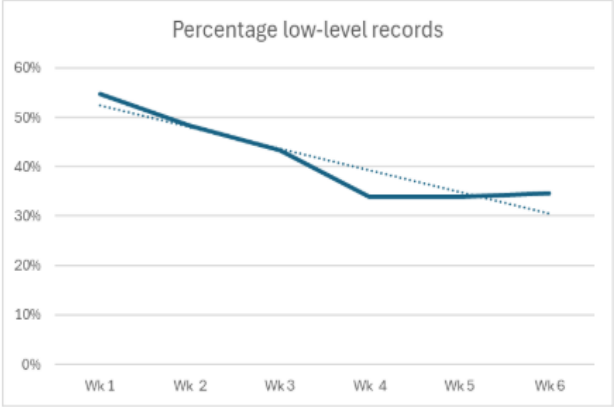
- New statutory recording requirements for all significant incidents involving restrictive interventions
- New statutory reporting requirements to parents/carers for each incident
- Updated definitions including 'seclusion' as a specific form of restrictive intervention
- Enhanced procedures for follow-up conversations and debriefs to foster a culture of continuous improvement
- Strengthened guidance on working with pupils with SEND, including mandatory risk assessments where restrictive interventions are more likely to be needed

The Quiet Classroom project has been trialed by classes within the Engagement Pathway, with some Core and Extended Pathway classes preparing to participate next. Early impact has been highly positive; learning environments feel noticeably calmer, staff are becoming more reflective in their practice and there is increased use of visual communication in place of speech. Pupils are choosing to use their communication books more frequently, which has reduced episodes of frustration-related dysregulation and supported emotional and relational development.

Alongside these successes, a small number of pupils are currently finding it challenging to manage their behaviour within the classroom. These pupils have been referred to the Senior Leadership Team and will be discussed in an upcoming pupil strategy meeting to identify targeted interventions and support.

Recent behaviour data reflects these concerns and shows a mixed picture. Whilst the percentage of low-level incidents has decreased across the term, the total number of incidents has increased.

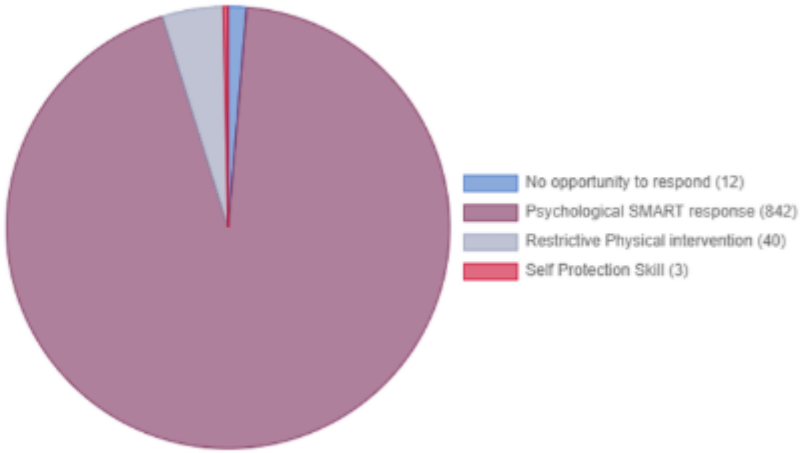
	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6	Totals / Combined Average
Total No. Incidents	53	58	60	106	121	81	479
No. low-level records	29	28	26	36	41	28	188
Percentage low-level records	55%	48%	43%	34%	34%	35%	39%



However, it's important to note that despite this rise in total incidents, the data shows a positive trend in how we're managing them. The chart below demonstrates the response types used during these incidents, with a notable decrease in the number of restrictive physical restraints. Specifically:

First half of autumn term: 82 restrictive physical interventions

Second half of autumn term: 80 restrictive physical interventions



We continue to use suspension only when absolutely necessary, with our primary focus remaining on early intervention and support. This term, we have had one fixed-term suspension.

Julie Brown

Integrated Therapy

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

Effective Partnerships with External Professionals

We continue to work closely with our NHS therapy colleagues to optimise outcomes for pupils in school. An example of this is the successful transition back into school for a child who has undergone multi-level orthopaedic surgery, which is being managed by Jo Golden (OT). This process requires a carefully phased return, close joint working with NHS Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy teams, coordinated support for classroom staff, the introduction of additional specialist equipment and an intensive rehabilitation programme. Ongoing collaboration ensures that the pupil's therapeutic needs are met safely and consistently across both school and clinical settings.

The Visual Impairment (VI) Group continues to be a highly effective intervention supporting pupils with visual impairment in developing key functional skills. Since September, two cohorts of pupils have successfully completed a block of therapy and a third cohort is due to begin this term. Kate Thompson (QTVI) provides weekly specialist input every Thursday and we are seeing strong carry-over of skills into the classroom, with pupils demonstrating increased confidence and independence. Sessions include practical life-skills activities, such as preparing a simple meal, which has been very well received by pupils and families.

Lauren Dawson (Therapy Assistant) is now well established in her role and continues to refine her skills in supporting pupils with visual impairment across school settings. Her work has included decluttering and re-organising classroom environments, labelling resources to enhance accessibility and identifying pupils who may benefit from specialist VI equipment.

Rachael Howitt and Amy Shiels (CHS SaLTs) continue to work closely with the NHS Speech and Language Therapy team to optimise NHS therapy provision and identify priorities for both services.

The therapy team continues to play a key role for pupils with high levels of need, including those who are on bespoke timetables. Supporting these children continues to require strong relationships in staff teams, parents/carers and external services, including CYPS and DCT and therapists continue to play a key part of the team.

Sensory Integration and Processing Intervention

Direct sensory integration sessions are underway for a small group of children from junior engagement. Early observations indicate that it is particularly effective for pupils who display vestibular-seeking behaviours, which is in-line with sensory integration theory. The aim is for children to feel regulated, which will support emotional wellbeing,

access to learning and communication. Initial sessions are shaping the intervention design, in preparation to deliver sessions for a wider group of children in school. While the room continues to operate as a multi-use space, we are now exploring ways to increase capacity and develop structured case studies to demonstrate the impact and therapeutic value of the swing system.

Therapeutic Horticulture

Danielle Forsyth is making excellent progress with her Social and Therapeutic Horticulture course. The next step is working with Danielle, SLT and Class Leads to identify how to integrate horticulture within the wider curriculum.

Danielle has successfully registered Cleaswell Hill School for the RHS Gardening for Schools campaign. This initiative includes six progressive levels and some free gardening resources are provided for the school. This will directly support the development of our horticulture offer for pupils.

Rebound Therapy

The Rebound Therapy Team continues to provide a high-quality, therapy-led service across the school.

An additional referral pathway has been introduced with David Manners (PE Lead) to help identify extended pathway pupils who may be experiencing difficulties engaging in physical activities during PE lessons. These children may be struggling due to factors such as low self-esteem, reduced stamina, exercise tolerance, reduced confidence or anxiety. Through this system, up to five pupils will be referred each half term. Ongoing collaboration between the Rebound Team and the PE Department will inform priorities and assess positive impact/outcomes. This joined-up approach aims to ensure targeted support and improved outcomes for extended pathway pupils.

Hydrotherapy

The pool continues to be used by a wide cross section of school.

We are currently expanding our Water Skills programme, giving more children the opportunity to improve their independence, confidence and ability in the water.

External hires continue to be very popular within the wider local community.

Income from hires will exceed £16,000 for this financial year.

Individual Developmental Assessment Framework (IDAF)

Rachael Howitt and Juliet Ruddick have been involved in the development of the Individual Development Assessment Framework (IDAF) for the Engagement and Engagement Plus Pathways, working closely with the Phase Leaders. This time-intensive project has involved analysing a wide range of assessment tools including the SCERTS model, developmental norms, the AET Progression Framework and Portage checklists among others. They helped shape the "Communication and Interaction", "Sensory and Physical" and "Fine and Gross motor skills" domains. This work required considerable professional expertise and interdisciplinary collaboration to produce a 'best-fit' developmental assessment for children with autism and complex needs within these pathways. This work was necessary as it hasn't been possible to identify a published assessment that accurately identifies and supports the needs of these children.

Speech, Language and Communication Initiatives and Approaches

Lego Therapy continues to run successfully, with four groups continuing to run in school with children from the Core and Extended Pathways. The children have made some impressive models which are testament to their teamwork. This sparks interest and curiosity from other children and this intervention remains an important part of our social communication offer.

The new narrative group intervention, "Chatterbugs", has now been rolled out and is progressing well. Early feedback shows that pupils are engaging positively and developing their narrative skills with increasing confidence.

The Makaton School Values Project has now been running for one year, so all school values have songs and videos attached to them. The Senior Core staff gave a joyous signed performance to "Feel This Moment" (value – Happiness). This term, the video for "When I Grow Up" (value – Independence) left people reaching for a box of hankies, with Amy's excellent signing and moving photographs of children throughout their school journey. Huge thanks to Reece Kelly (IT Technician) for his expertise and support in producing the videos, which are amazing. The Sign of the Week videos can be found at #MakatonMondays.

The Multi-Disciplinary Special Interest Group (SIG) has continued to meet regularly, providing ongoing professional development opportunities and promoting shared learning across therapy roles. The group met in February 2026, their second meeting of the academic year. This posed an opportunity to discuss the controversial "Gestalt Language Processing" topic that featured in a systematic review in 2025. Cleaswell Hill therapists are working closely, particularly with therapists from Percy Hedley, to monitor and understand research findings to support approaches that reflect best practice.

Oracy

Rachael Howitt and Amy Shiels have now analysed the staff and pupil questionnaires. The recent staff oracy questionnaire shows that oracy is well-embedded in daily practice. Findings show that staff demonstrate strong use of total communication approaches (e.g. visual supports, AAC tools, differentiated questioning, storytelling and structured language programmes). Priorities include updating and expanding training (particularly for TAs), supporting confidence through coaching and modelling, streamlining planning tools ensuring consistent access to AAC and visuals. It is necessary to further establish a clear whole-school definition and progression for oracy, supported by both short-term CPD and longer-term pathway-specific development.

SALT colleagues are also leading on "The Quiet Project", a class-based action research initiative focused on providing 'low arousal' environments with reduced noise. The project is based upon a wide range of research in early communication skills, communication development, as well as the Autism Education Trust. Early indications within the Engagement Pathway are positive for both pupil outcomes and staff well-being. The project aims to extend to include classes within the Core and Extended Pathways to show the impact on environments across the whole school.

Amy and Rachael continue to work systematically through all children in school to ensure EHCPs contain accurate, updated descriptions of need and provision. 59% of all pupils have been assessed and updated with the last 2 years, this number increases to 66% since therapy team began.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Rachael Ford Hutchinson (Mental Health Lead) and Helen McIntyre (Phase Leader/PSHEE Lead) continue to refine and develop the PSHEE curriculum with wider teams across school. Rachael is currently leading on the implementation of the 'FRIENDS Resilience' Programme having identified four key staff leads within the extended pathway and one in core to complete the training, pilot delivery and provide feedback. The aim is for wider curriculum implementation from Autumn 2026.

Rachael's role continues to include providing pastoral support for children alongside guidance and coaching to staff, including those at the Appleby Centre. The updated 'Graduated Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing' reflects our current universal approach, with further updates

made to higher tiers of support, including the role of external professionals. This document will remain dynamic as opportunities and aims are realised for current and future cohorts. The strategy to strengthen the 'Universal Provision' and 'Getting Support' is to pilot a model of pastoral support in the extended pathway. This work has begun alongside Lauren Dawson (Therapy Assistant) *Jamie Wheadon (Extended Pathway Lead) and a small team of support staff.*

Juilet Ruddick

Accessibility

The school's Accessibility Strategy strengthens inclusion by improving curriculum access, physical environments and communication systems, ensuring all learners, families and professionals can access information and spaces safely and effectively.

Partnership with families and external agencies is central to the school's work. Parents are involved through regular engagement events, collaborative EHCP planning, and accessible communication. Multi-agency working helps ensure provision is holistic and responsive to each child's needs. This is an ongoing piece of work with more detail provided by Helen Mcintyre regarding the progress of the parent partnership.

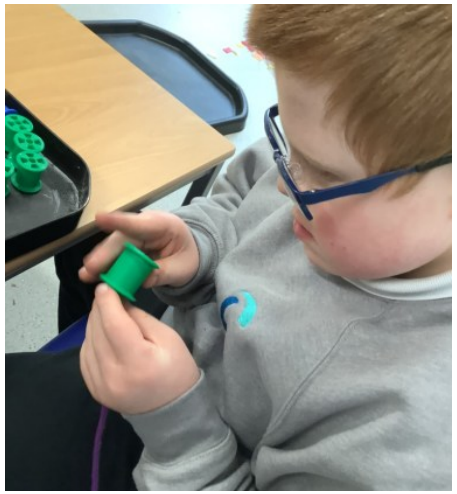
Inclusion is continuously reviewed through learning walks, assessment data, pupil and parent voice and governance oversight. Collectively, these approaches ensure every child is valued, barriers are proactively removed and pupils are supported to develop independence, confidence and future aspirations.

Admissions

We are continuing to evolve in our rationale regarding admissions following the increasing changes to pupil profiles. The new White Paper consultation indicates that our strategy will need to shift further towards prioritising pupils with complex profiles who meet the stricter EHCP threshold in the future, assessing suitability using richer, standardised digital evidence with the creation of online platforms for EHCPs and the new Individual Support Plan (ISP), preparing for increased demand driven by national expansion of specialist places and working more closely with mainstream schools as part of a systemwide continuum of provision. This is something we are well prepared for with our established Fusion Learning Hub and the number of contacts built through this.

Following the introduction of our new 5-pathway structure, we are now seeing where we can increase capacity to allow further pupils to be admitted.

Cleaswell Hill has grown significantly in both size and complexity and we are increasingly limited in our ability to meet the needs of pupils requiring individualised spaces, bespoke curricula and high staffing ratios to ensure safety. For learners with the most complex profiles, our capacity has reached a point where admissions operate on a "one-in, one-out" basis; we have not yet been able to work with the authority to find a more appropriate provision for our most complex learners despite multi agency collaboration at a forensic level. When assessing whether we can meet need, we must consider not only each pupil's presentation, but also the availability of appropriate physical spaces and specialist resources. All classrooms are already operating at capacity in relation to the complexity of current pupils and the staffing levels required which places natural limits on further admissions. We are also unable to admit pupils solely based on their EHCP, as these documents do not always fully reflect a child's current needs. For this reason, visiting pupils in their existing setting is essential



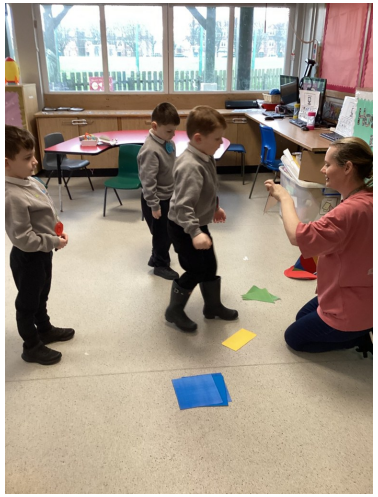
to understanding the provision they require and determining whether our school can safely and effectively meet those needs. Cohort composition is an increasingly important factor in our admissions decisions, as the social and emotional wellbeing of pupils is central to building classes that can thrive together. For example, a pupil with a profound SEMH profile would not have an appropriate cohort at Cleaswell Hill due to the vulnerability and emotional immaturity of our current learners, who could be negatively affected by a more socially advanced peer. Taken together, these considerations ensure that admissions decisions remain responsible, ethical and centred on the wellbeing and safety of all pupils already on roll as well as those seeking placement.

Emma Dunn

Pathway Structure

Teaching and curriculum have always been personalised through a stage not age model, with pathways designed around developmental needs rather than chronology. Staff use consistent, specialist strategies such as multisensory teaching, communication systems, therapeutic support and small steps assessment to remove barriers and help pupils thrive academically, socially and in preparation for adulthood.

We understand the need to continually reassess our structure to best meet the need of emerging cohorts, and we are reviewing our pathway model from a 3-pathway to a 5-pathway model. The shift to a 5-pathway model is driven by the increasing complexity and diversity of pupil needs, which can no longer be effectively met within broad, overstretched pathways. A more refined structure allows for better curriculum personalisation, clearer progression models and more accurate assessment aligned to distinct learning profiles. It also strengthens Preparation for Adulthood, enabling pathways to focus more precisely on communication, sensory needs, functional learning, or subject specific development with a view to outcomes achieved upon leaving school.



The change ensures greater equity, allowing for more flexible movement between pathways. Staff expertise can be targeted more effectively, improving the match between specialist pedagogy and learner needs. The new model also offers clearer information for parents, supporting confidence and transparency in our approaches and aims, while improving transitions both within school and beyond. The 5-pathway approach also aligns the school with current research and sector trends.

Emma Dunn

Appleby Centre

Students across The Appleby Centre have continued to work hard this term, demonstrating strong engagement and commitment towards their individual goals and qualifications. Staff report high levels of effort, positive attitudes, and a clear focus from students as we move further into the academic year.

Post-16 Transition

All students who are due to leave school this academic year have completed their college applications.

- 14 students applied for college places
- 12 students have already received offers and have been accepted

We are currently awaiting responses for the remaining 2 students

In addition, 1 student will be leaving The Appleby Centre at the end of this academic year to access Adult Social Care and transition work is underway to ensure a smooth and well-supported move.

Qualifications and Assessment

Students continue to make good progress towards their accredited outcomes. Assessments have already taken place in several qualification areas, including:

- Entry Level English, maths and science
- Level 1 BTEC Home Cooking Skills
- Entry Level 2 BTEC Pre-Vocational Studies

ASDAN Lifeskills Challenge

Students working towards GCSE qualifications are preparing for mock exams in March and staff are providing targeted support to help them build confidence and exam readiness.

Independent Travel Training

Two groups of students have successfully completed the first stage of Independent Travel Training, delivered by Northumberland County Council.

As part of the programme, students have:

- Travelled within the local community using public transport
- Used the bus for short local journeys
- Travelled by train to Newcastle
- Practised communication and social skills in real-world settings
- Enjoyed lunch in a restaurant as part of developing independence and confidence in new environments

Students developed a wide range of skills through this experience, including:

- Navigation and route-planning
- Understanding timetables and transport procedures
- Road safety and awareness
- Confidence in unfamiliar places
- Social communication in public spaces

- Money handling and ordering food.

Feedback from the Independent Travel Trainers was excellent, highlighting students' enthusiasm, resilience, and progress. We will be informed shortly if any students are suitable to move on to Stage 2 of the programme.

Enrichment

This term, students at The Appleby Centre have taken part in a wide range of enrichment activities designed to broaden their experiences, develop life skills, and support their social and cultural development.

Students participated in a STEM robot competition at Nissan, where they worked collaboratively to design, build and operate robotic systems. This opportunity enabled them to apply problem-solving skills in a real-world engineering environment and engage with industry professionals.

We were also successful in securing free tickets to the new musical *Weird* at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle, giving students valuable access to live theatre and supporting their cultural development. Students responded positively to the performance and enjoyed the opportunity to experience a major regional arts venue.

Our Table Cricket team has had an especially successful term. They won the local competition and students are now training hard in preparation for the regional competition in Durham. Their dedication, teamwork and sportsmanship have been excellent and staff are supporting them as they work towards the next level of competition.

Students have also accessed a range of health and wellbeing activities, including sessions at Ashington Leisure Centre and the Hirst Welfare Gym, helping them build confidence, fitness and independence in the community.

A number of curriculum-linked visits have taken place, including trips to the Ringtons Factory and the Full Circle Food Project, where students learned about local industries, production processes and community initiatives.

To support personal development and social skills, students have also taken part in several leisure and cultural visits, including: Newcastle Cathedral; Hancock Museum; Manor Walks Shopping Centre; Angel of the North; Metrocentre. These experiences have helped students develop communication skills, confidence in new environments and an understanding of their local region.

Summary

The recent term has been a highly positive and productive period at The Appleby Centre. Students continue to demonstrate commitment, resilience and enthusiasm across all areas of school life. Their progress towards accredited qualifications is strong and staff remain focused on ensuring every student is well-supported as assessments and exam preparations continue.

Enrichment opportunities have further strengthened students' personal development, confidence and independence, with a wide range of academic, cultural, sporting and community-based experiences enriching their learning beyond the classroom.

Our transition work for students preparing to leave school is progressing well, with the majority already securing college places and further support in place for those awaiting confirmation or transitioning to Adult Social Care.

Overall, the term reflects the dedication of staff, the engagement of students and the continued support of families and external partners. We look forward to building on this momentum as we move into the next term.

Charlotte Calcutt

Educational Visits

Educational visits provide essential real-world learning experiences that enable pupils to apply classroom knowledge in practical contexts, making concepts easier to understand and remember. These visits support curriculum connections whilst building confidence and key life skills.

Beyond academic learning, educational visits play a vital role in developing pupils' physical capabilities through movement, exploration and active engagement in different environments, strengthening stamina, balance and coordination. Navigating unfamiliar spaces, following routines and managing transport independently teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe in real-life situations.

Educational visits create valuable opportunities for pupils to practise social communication using their preferred methods—whether verbal, visual or through AAC—whilst developing essential skills such as turn-taking, requesting help and cooperative working with peers and unfamiliar adults.

Crucially, these experiences are central to preparing pupils for adulthood. Pupils gain practical experience in everyday skills including travelling independently, making purchases, ordering food and following public rules. Through repeated exposure to community settings, workplaces, shops and leisure facilities, pupils develop the independence, confidence and real-world competencies necessary for successful adult life.

Julie Brown

Fusion - Development of Outward Facing Partnerships

As part of our Partnership with the Great North Early Years Primary Hub (GNEYPH) we have launched the Online Inclusion Network as Strategic Partners, responding to current highlighted SEND needs. Attendance has been strong, with 40–70 participants joining each online session. Webinars are recorded and available to download.

Abi McCarthy is working with GNEYPH to provide bespoke SEND support in the local area, including focused observations, tailored strategies, real-time coaching and guidance on future training pathways. So far she has worked with 3 schools.

We have continued work to support Bothal and Central around developing their pathways for their SEND children and offer of supportive training.

Abi McCarthy is working with the Light House SSB Seaton Sluice to provide support to develop their environment, curriculum offer and to work alongside staff to meet any training needs.

We held our first 'parent partnership session' this term, with three further sessions advertised. There has been strong engagement from parents and carers. These sessions will take place at the Bothal Conference Centre.

An online schedule and newsletter have been launched to promote the next two months of our training offer, with links to up to date SEND news.

We are holding ongoing discussions about the shape of our CPD offer for support staff, using data from the support staff survey to inform and refine our training offer through bitesize sessions, AET and personalised training written inhouse.

We have now subscribed to the National College to ensure that our CPD offer is aligned with statutory modules and often more personalised CPD for staff needs.

Northumbria University Collaboration

We are moving forward quickly with our work to become a hub of Northumbria University delivering high quality training and materials derived from research driven, evidenced based perspectives to support teachers and leaders with practical strategies to improve pupil outcomes.

The CPD programme "Developing Inclusive Classrooms: From Understanding to Action" is a six-session, 12-hour partnership between Northumbria University and Cleaswell Hill designed to strengthen staff knowledge and practice in supporting neurodivergent and SEND learners. The programme blends theory covering neuro-

diversity, the social model of disability, sensory needs, behaviour as communication and the Universal Design for Learning framework with highly practical, classroom-focused strategies demonstrated by specialist staff. Through interactive workshops, case studies, action planning and resource creation, participants develop the skills needed to design accessible curricula, implement effective regulation and communication strategies and embed whole-school inclusive approaches.

The CPD emphasises sustainable cultural change, aligning with statutory duties and organisational priorities and culminates in reflective assessment, evidence gathering and the development of long-term professional goals to enhance inclusive practice across the school. This will generate considerable income over time as well as regional recognition for the Fusion Learning Hub.

We also contribute to the University's work by delivering sessions at seminars and conferences for trainee teachers and postgraduate Master's students. The university has now completed research based on staff interviews exploring the impact of classroom-based action research and is progressing toward publication. We are extremely proud of this collaborative partnership and look forward to strengthening and expanding our work together in the future.

School Links

School continues our outward facing approach. Great links with local and regional businesses and members of the community 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
- Great North Early Years Primary Hub
- The National College
- Sex Ed Forum
- Child Explotation Online Protection (CEOP)
- ARFID Champions Programme (NHS England)
- Links with local schools; Wise Academy, Central, Bothal and Castle
- Federation of Special School Leaders (FLSE)
- Northumberland Mental Health Leads
- National Network of Special Schools
- Magic Breakfast

Spring Term Diary Dates

Value - Independence

Training Day	5 January
SIP Visit	7 January
Governor Resource Management Committee Meeting	7 January
SIP Visit	13 January
Commuted Hours 3/6	21 January
SIP Visit	21 January
Governor Monitoring Visit - Safeguarding	22 January
SIP Visit	27 January
NCC GDPR Audit	28 January
Governor Monitoring Visit - Inclusion	2 February
Governor Resource Management Committee Meeting	2 February
Non-Uniform Day (NSPCC Number Day)	6 February
Children's Mental Health Week	9-13 February
Non-Uniform Day (Valentines)	13 February
End of Half Term	13 February

Value - Integrity

Governor Monitoring Visit - Achievement/Curriculum and Teaching	3 March
Governor Monitoring Visit - Extended	4 March
Governor Resource Management Committee Meeting	6 March
Governor Strategic Policy and Direction Committee Meeting	6 March
Commuted Hours 4/6	11 March
Non-Uniform Day (Comic Relief)	20 March
Governor Monitoring Visit - Attendance	Date TBC
Governor Monitoring Visit - Engagement +	Date TBC
Governor Monitoring Visit - Engagement	Date TBC
SIP Visit	Date TBC
Full Governing Body Meeting (Spring)	24 March
Parents Evenings	25/26 March
Non-Uniform Day	2 April
End of Spring Term	2 April