

Overview summary report regarding impact measures for ASC developments

February 2017

The supporting documents, produced by Mary Bruton (Autism Friendly Schools Co-ordinator) which accompany this summary report, list a variety of impact measures which are starting to emerge from the 1st cohort of Autism Champions who are now in their 2nd year of training. The first cohort consisted of 17 teachers from 15 provisions who expressed an interest in enhancing the experiences and understanding for students with ASC traits / diagnosis within their establishments.

The Case Studies (below, pages 3 – 12) portray the variety of approaches and impacts which are emerging, and show that students are encountering a more positive and responsive approach. There is a greater understanding of the difficulties ASC students encounter, and how these impact on their day to day experiences. Students who were previously unhappy and struggling in their mainstream school environments are now far happier, and feel that they have staff who they can seek out when they encounter difficulties.

The ASC Champions have also cascaded information to staff and colleagues within their organisations and utilised the resources which have been made available. This has therefore created a wider impact within the schools, and more staff are becoming aware of the strategies and approaches which can be adapted.

Parents are reporting that they are noticing an impact on their children, and feel that they are better supported, and happier individuals.

Within the Bay we now have more schools who are more confident in meeting the needs of students with ASC.

The ASC Champions have direct access to the Autism Friendly Schools Co-ordinator, and the staff within the Enhanced Resource Provisions at Preston and Brixham College. This access to a greater level of expertise and knowledge ensures that they have immediate access to advice when they need it.

The 2nd cohort of teachers has also recently started their training and training for 33 TA's has also been put in place.

The range of approaches is providing a wealth of learning experiences and the staff who are undertaking this training are very committed and wish to make a difference for the students within their provisions.

Dorothy Hadleigh, Head of SEND

20th February 2017

Autism-friendly Schools Project Progress Report: Sept 2016 - Feb 2017

Seventeen Champions from cohort 1 took up the challenge of changing the culture within their schools and to improve their autism-friendliness. The schools are: Brixham College, Eden Park, Churston Ferrers, White Rock, Kings Ash, Oldway, Sherwell Valley, Torquay Girls' Grammar, Torquay Academy, Barton Hill, St. Marychurch, St. Cuthbert Mayne, Homelands, EOTAS and The Spires.

Each Champion has submitted an action plan which prioritises the needs in the individual schools. The plans are linked to the AET (Autism Education Trust) Competency Framework. The activities range from providing CPD to teachers and support staff, implementing new procedures and processes to support pupils with autism across the school, advising and providing guidance to colleagues who work with pupils with autism, direct work with pupils with autism to remove barriers to learning and participation and making links with parents. Case studies in the appendix demonstrate the impact of their work.

The Autism-friendly Schools Co-ordinator has visited each Champion in their schools on two occasions to discuss action plans and offer support and challenge.

Cohort 1 Champions may be contacted and visited by other schools for advice, guidance and strategies to support pupils with autism.

In November 2016 we ran a Tier 2 training day.. All Torbay schools were invited to participate in the training which was a repeat of training offered in December 2015. It was open to teachers and teaching assistants and there were two aims. One was to identify teachers who might wish to become an Autism Champion (preferably in schools without a Champion already), the second was to further promote awareness and knowledge of autism across the Bay in order to improve pupils' and their families' experience. There were 45 delegates, some of whom were teaching assistants.

From the training we have 9 further teachers who have started their Tier 3 Autism Champions' training. They are from: Combe Pafford, Torre, Preston, Torbay School, PCSA (2), Kings Ash (replacement) St. Cuthbert Mayne and Brixham College.

We are running a further Tier 2 training day on 23rd February specifically for teaching assistants in schools where we have existing or trainee Champions. This is to build capacity to further support pupils and improve the autism-friendly culture within the schools. At the time of writing 33 delegates are signed up.

In January 2 LEGO-based Therapy Workshops for teachers were run. LEGO-based Therapy is a small group (two or three pupils) intervention which works particularly well with primary-aged pupils with autism (although can be adapted for secondary-aged pupils) that promotes speech and language and social communication.

In conjunction with a Speech and Language Therapist, the SENDCo, the Autism Champion and Communication Lead at White Rock have put together a two hour

workshop which includes the theory of the intervention, how to set up an effective programme along with a video which exemplifies how it works. The workshops took place after school. There will be a further workshop in the afternoon for teaching assistants. Participating schools have been provided with a book and starter LEGO resources funded through the Project. The parent representative on the AIG approached Sainsbury's who provided some of the LEGO through their sale and made a £30 donation to the Project.

Twenty-eight schools have participated in the workshops and the feedback from the evening workshops has evaluated them 100% excellent in the areas of: meeting the aims of the event, materials supplied and overall evaluation. My thanks go to the Speech and Language Service and the staff from White Rock for their time and the excellence of the training. Schools will be followed up to examine the impact of the workshop in the summer term.

Autism Champions' Network meetings have taken place each half term since March 2016. Each meeting has a speaker and an opportunity for Champions to share any issues and discuss good practice. Champions have heard from Donna Mepsted, Portage Worker and parent of a child with autism, Charlotte Child, Speech and Language, Debbie Mansfield, EPS, Peggy Seddon and two Sixth Form students with autism from Brixham College. All speakers have enhanced the Champions' knowledge and understanding of autism and services that support families and individuals.

The most profound effect on Champions was when they heard the young men from the College whose parents were also there. One Champion refers to the effect in her case study. The parent of one of the students told me of the effect on her son of speaking to the group. She said, 'I perceive a little self-acceptance creeping in.' The significance of the comment is that her son has long believed that he should not be alive as he is 'a genetic mistake'. The opportunity for him to speak would not have happened without this project.

Mary Bruton

Autism-friendly Schools Co-ordinator

February 2017

CASE STUDIES

Mayfield Special School case study

I teach a yr. one class of nine pupils, seven with autism, at a special school in Torquay. I wanted to write a case study on the importance of transition.

I was advised that I had a new pupil starting with me on the Monday after the weekend. This was on the Friday. My deputy rang me at home (I do not work on Fridays) to inform me. I expressed frustration at the lack of any proper transition for L.Z. She explained that mum had visited Mayfield and had broken down in tears because her son was very unhappy at his current school and not coping. Management had decided that the move needed to be immediate because of this.

I have always felt good transition is paramount for settling a child's anxiety in any situation but especially when a child is moving from home to school or school to school. This is especially true of children with special needs and specifically autism. Having learned about the impact of 'social stories' on my autism champion training, I knew the importance of preparing a child with autism for change. I had previously made a 'social story' booklet for a pupil who was going to Euro Disney on the Eurostar. The parents of this child had found it incredibly helpful in preparing their child for this holiday and were grateful for the support. We then went on to make this same child a 'social story' for visiting the dentist and again, it made a usually traumatic experience, a positive one. I made 'social stories' for pupils moving up to the next class at the end of the year so that over the summer holiday, they could continue to understand and then accept the change which was going to happen and start to see it as routine.

With the permission of my deputy head teacher, I rang L.Z's family to ask if I could make a home visit at the weekend before he was to start. The family are Polish and have lived in the UK for two years. Polish is spoken at home within the family but English is understood and spoken, a little. The family were happy for me to visit and so I went to the family home on the Saturday afternoon.

When I arrived L.Z was playing with his father and a large assortment of small world animals. I went in to the main living space and spoke at length with his mother about L.Z's needs. She had already taken part in portage training and had contact with John Parke's unit for speech and language therapy and support. She was able to tell me about her son's sensory processing disorder and specifically about his behaviours. She shared his previous school's home school books. She told me, when he says 'papa' it does not mean 'daddy' it means 'finished'. This was very important as he was being misunderstood at school a lot over this word. She also told me 'thuli' means he wants a hug.

I played with L.Z for a short while, sharing his toys, letting him smell me and acquaint himself. I shared with him a simple 'social story' about him starting at Mayfield on Monday morning. He repeated some key words after me and took the book off to show Dad.

When he arrived with Mum on the Monday morning he recognised me, he smiled and took my hand. He had no issues in leaving mum. He stayed until 1.30pm for the first two days, 2.30pm for the next few and then started on school transport the following week.

His mother wrote in his home school book, that he said at home, that this was the best school he had ever been to.

L.Z's mother and I correspond daily in his home-school book and continue to discuss his behaviours and needs which are still prevalent. I do feel however, that the open communication between myself and the family, the attention we did pay to transition and the autism friendly environment all helped L.Z's anxieties to reduce during what could have been a stressful transition period.

EOTAS

1. Due to the nature of our service we often have students that go through the process of assessment for Autism very late. This happened to be the case for one family whose son had been referred to us for anxiety and depression. TF aged 13 (Child) had withdrawn from school in year 7 and mum had moved over to EHE but felt that her son required a higher level of educational input.

During the period of assessment TF really struggled with his siblings and mum grew concerned about many of his unusual behaviours whilst at home. TF rarely sleeps and goes into what the family have named 'T's World', in which he will jump, spin and make random noises at a loud level throughout the evening and night. TF struggled in the dynamic household and found change very difficult to accept. At times he heard good and bad voices telling him to do things (thoughts and trying to work out situations from his day).

As a result of the training I had undertaken whilst on the level 3 Autism course, I felt able to support mum and the family more than I otherwise would have been able. I was able to print and laminate now and then timetables; for help with change and short term planning structure within the family. I also supplied laminated emotion cards to the family, so mum could use visual stimulus when discussing what was upsetting him.

I was able to meet with mum at the family home and discuss options for helping TF prepare himself for the day. We looked at having a set menu and letting TF know what he would be having for tea that night in the morning. I felt able to give supportive comments and strategies that might be useful to them. I made sure that the family was aware that all of these strategies would be do no harm even if the diagnosis was not Autism.

TF has an Autism diagnosis and I am still in close communication with the family. We have recently had to make adjustments to his timetable, for a short period, whilst he was struggling with the changes in his school class members. Through the training I am able to talk with mum and offer solutions, something I would struggle to understand and complete without the knowledge I have gained.

2. Another case, in which I feel I have been able to have an impact, is also with a student who has only recently been diagnosed within the last 18 months; he is now a year 11 student. I have had to lead training through weekly meetings and also INSET to help staff understand Autism to a greater level. There was a feeling amongst members of staff that the young man was being rude and behaving in ways that were deliberately done for impact. I felt I was able in this instance to offer information into why certain behaviours may be escalating and also look for strategies (including a step by step flow diagram, of lesson instructions, staff have taken this structure message on board and now implement this in their own individual ways) which may help the student's engagement.

There was an occasion in which a member of staff was upset with the student for refusing to enter the room. In this instance I felt able to discuss the reasons this may be happening, such as the door was closed when he arrived, the desks were laid out differently, the student had to sit in a different seat or was another student in the room in a different space. I would not have been able to have this conversation with the staff member had I not been on the training.

I feel that through the training and advice I have offered, staff manage day to day situations with the student with a greater sense of awareness. This is particularly noticeable with the GCSE mocks that are currently being given. Staff are aware of the students' struggles with concentration and management of tasks and are working as a team to help him prepare for this period of time, they do not take it personally when he is over stimulated and needs a break.

The Autism training has given me the ability to guide and lead my team in working with Autism within their classrooms. I feel that I wouldn't have been able to do this with confidence previously. It has also made a difference to my own practice and understanding of the condition, which in turn has helped me work with different students in an appropriate way, which works for them. I have

found I notice more, for instance if I am not in the classroom before the lesson starts with the door open ready the student is not able to enter the room. Also that closing the door after the student has entered is important for them to be able to begin.

The Spires

BB tends to suffer from anxiety and panic attacks. This is exacerbated by the stress of approaching exams. I have met with BB and discussed what the triggers are for these attacks and what strategies we could put in place to help her. We meet fortnightly to discuss any issues that has arisen and I have given BB an exit card to use if her anxieties become overwhelming. I have created an 'Autism Base' which BB uses on a daily basis. She has a drawer with resources such as an adult colouring book, pens, sandalwood oil and a workbook giving information about Autism. I also emailed and spoke to all staff who work with BB to discuss how best to support her and provided resources to help teachers and support staff do this. I am in regular contact with home to keep her Mum up to date but also to ensure I know of any issues which may have arisen at home. BB seems much happier and is managing her anxieties well. She has also agreed to help create materials for a staff training session on Autism.

Parent feedback: As a parent of a child with ASD, the A room has been hugely beneficial for my daughter B. She was fortunate enough to be one of the first invited to the room in its infancy and as such she really does see it as a safe place to go. She feels she can go there when things get too much for her. B struggles with crowds and noises so break times and lunch times have been torture for her. She now goes to the A room and enjoys her break times. As a system within the school I cannot praise it highly enough and would like to thank everyone involved from the bottom of my heart.

'Calm and Quiet' club

I have created a 'calm and quiet' library session aimed at giving Autistic students a time every week which is in a safe and calm environment. Only invited students are allowed to attend and the library is closed to all other students. Initially it was four students with Autism or students who are going through the diagnostic process who attended the group. The students initially took part in individual activities (computers, board games and reading were all available). The students seemed to benefit from spending time with other students with Autism and gradually began interacting more freely. JT is a Year 7 student who is currently awaiting a paediatrician appointment. He was initially very quiet and did not engage with the other students but over time he has begun to chat and play games (Battleships is especially popular) and is gaining confidence all the time. The group has now widened to include a few carefully chosen students from the same year group and friendships are developing. I believe the group has enabled these students to interact more freely and with more confidence.

RC was recently diagnosed with Autism and struggles to focus in lessons and can become disruptive. I meet with RC every week to discuss progress and identify difficulties. We are using The Incredible 5 Point Scale to allow RC to manage his anxiety and to identify when his anxiety is building so that he can begin to self-manage the situation. I have given RC an exit card to use when he feels that he may reach the top of this scale. He will then come to me where he manages his anxiety by setting a five minute timer and either reading or working on 'Artistic Autistic' colouring. He is beginning to manage this without prompting. RC was part of the student voice group who planned the Autism Base and although he uses it only for meetings has said that knowing the room is there helps with his anxiety. I am in regular contact with RC's parents and ensure that any information is given to staff when needed e.g. when he has had a difficult evening/morning. RC has now been moved into my set for English and we have created an 'office' for him in the room to help avoid distractions. I also ensure that he has a schedule of the lesson available which has had a marked impact on his concentration and quality of work. I have emailed his teachers resources and ideas of how to support RC in lessons. RC also attends the 'Calm and Quiet' club which has enabled him to form friendships and interact with students in a safe space. RC is also helping to create resources for staff training and assemblies on Autism.

JT is a Year 7 student who is in the process of being diagnosed with Autism. He is a quiet boy who tends to bottle up anxiety until he gets home. Both JT and his Mum were very anxious about his move to secondary school. I have ensured I have contact with Mum every few days so that any issues can be dealt with quickly (for example, he struggled with doing his tie after PE and I emailed his PE teacher to explain this was a focus of his anxiety). JT is very literal and can get upset when general statements are made. I emailed his teachers and support staff to ensure that they were aware of this and to adapt their language for JT. I meet with JT on a regular basis. Organisation is a focus for our meetings and we have agreed that JT will attend homework club every week alongside one lunchtime and that homework will be kept in school to avoid it getting lost. I will email teachers to get any homework tasks which may have been misplaced. JT also attends the 'Calm and Quiet club' on a Friday. I am planning to continue working with Jake and his Mum whilst they complete the diagnostic process.

Parent feedback: Since before starting at secondary school, J has been very fearful of the change and all that came with it, so having Mrs H (Autism Champion) who we could both go to for any issues or worries has really helped J and myself. For J it has helped him for so many reasons;

- * he has a safe person to go

- * for help when something unexpected has happened and didn't know what to do

- * for lost homework/PE kit

- * looks forward to his Friday club with Mrs H as he knows he will enjoy this with no pressure or anyone being unkind,

- * to have someone he knows

For me it's lovely to have one person I can go to when J has come home with something that I can't help with, to know that J has a go to person is a great comfort for me, also for anything I think he needs or could do with extra help, Mrs H has always sorted it straight away, which puts my mind at ease.

RR is in the process of being diagnosed with Autism. He has accrued a large number of behaviour points and has been internally excluded. RR has now been moved into my tutor group and we are having weekly meetings to discuss any problems. His parents have said that they are struggling to cope at home and I have sent some resources to help support them. We are using the Incredible 5 point Scale and this seems to be helping him focus on when his behaviour deteriorates. RR has been given an exit card to use and has used this to try and manage his anxiety. I am in regular contact with home to ensure any issues can be addressed swiftly.

St Marychurch

CONTEXT - how he presented, his strengths and needs

S has attended our school since September 2014. I was his Teacher during Nursery and Reception. He was diagnosed with Autism in March 2015. S had a familiar adult appointed as his 1:1. He was very settled during his time in the Foundation Stage and made good progress both academically and socially and emotionally.

S has found settling into Year One hard. His Teacher met with the school Inclusion Manager and 1:1 to discuss concerns. Lots of changes were suggested and there were discussions of Special School. Some of the concerns are listed here:

- S walks around the school and interrupts others learning time.
- S wasn't going out to play as he wouldn't wear a coat.
- S having food as a reward.

ACTION - how the school has responded to his needs

Although I did not attend the meeting, I read through the minutes and the actions they had agreed and gave some ideas or suggestions.

- I believe that S should have a purpose to his walks sometimes, but he also used to use them as a sensory down time – does this still happen? I agree that he should not walk into other classes during learning time. However, part of this may be due to his anxiety around needing to know who and what is in that room, what it looks, smells and feels like to be in there – thinking especially about the office here as he used to love shredding – could he have this as a job, linked to one of his walks?
- Does S have to wear a coat? Some children with Autism can find it distressing to wear a coat, or some don't feel the cold.
- Food was not being used as a reward but as a motivator. The Early Bird book talks a lot about motivators. Some children with Autism do not understand emotions and feelings. Hunger could be something S is feeling but not understanding it and so he is displaying unwanted behaviours. Also some children with Autism like to have something to chew on as part of their sensory processing needs – I know S had a chew buddy in Foundation stage. If the food is taken away it would be imperative for S to have another motivator.

IMPACT - how he presents now, his strengths and needs

- S now has a symbol on his visual timetable for when it is time to walk – whether that is a walk to complete a job or a sensory walk. He goes to collect printing as part of his day at school. There have been less interruptions to others learning as he is not wandering in and out of classrooms.
- S played outside without a coat for a number of weeks and then began wearing a coat again. Being able to play outside again allowed him to 'run off some steam' and increase his social interactions.
- Food is now not used as a motivator. Stickers and the use of LEGO are working instead. S uses his chew buddy during lesson time.

St Cuthbert Mayne

Background

AW is a year 8 boy who had perceived behavioural problems when he joined us at the start of year 7. Last summer, he received a formal diagnosis of autism. Over the first half term of this academic year, the SIMs behaviour log indicated key behavioural issues in the following:

- Not following instructions
- Fidgeting
- Disrupting others
- Refusing to work
- Arguing back
- Being rude to teachers in lessons
- English - refusal to write, resulting in several parkings
- D+T - being rude to the teacher, not following instructions and seeking distractions (particularly frustrating as in Art, with the same teacher, AW is quite pleasant).
- Science - not following instructions and writing very little in lessons.

Observation and intervention

Having reviewed the behaviour profile with the SENCO, I then observed lessons in late November where most of the incidents were taking place - Science, English and D+T. I looked at the teaching and learning atmosphere, routines and expectations and level/form of instruction. I then fed this back to the teachers and suggested strategies that could be used. Amongst others, here are the key ones:

- Slow pace down
- Keep to routine with the whole class
- Use visuals to support, especially printed sheets to reinforce whiteboard information
- Move to a seat with less visual stimuli
- Reduce verbal instructions and don't stack questions
- Wait for a response

- Praise processes and not outcomes (eg, making effort, social interactions, rather than the final grade)

Outcomes

AW has made positive progress since feedback to staff:

- Behavioural incidents have reduced (4 incidents in the last 4 weeks, rather than the 21 incidents in a 4 week period last November 2016)
- English: the teacher indicated that AW was more biddable and able to begin written tasks. Moving his seating position and using visual reinforcement to scaffold helped considerably.
- Science: more productive with knowing the sequence and order of work due to seating move and use of visuals.
- D+T: Teacher and student relationship improved when it was pointed out to AW that his Art teacher (whom he gets on with very well) was actually the same as his D+T teacher. In addition, the classroom environment was adapted to consider less stimulating 'office'-style spaces

Teachers have fed back through a survey to indicate positive impact of this approach by the Autism Champion at STCM.

Next steps:

- I will be observing AW in his literacy intervention session to see where we can develop opportunities for curriculum and learning around social interaction. To take place early February.
- Develop student voice to get more of AW's feedback on what is working for him
- Develop communication / forum with AW's parents to continue to work more holistically on routines, expectations and strategies

Torquay Academy

Since beginning my role as the Autism Champion for Torquay Academy, I have started running Social Stories with two key students. For the purpose of this case study I will focus on OG who I commenced Social Stories with back in October. This student is in the process of being diagnosed with Autism but the school is already treating him as if this is the case. The Social Stories sessions I have with him are part of this provision.

OG has had a difficult time at secondary school. He has been excluded many times – often relating to his reluctance to follow instructions – perhaps an element of his Autism. OG also finds it difficult to accept some rules and does not understand why he should sit through a class if he doesn't like the teacher. The Social Stories sessions are all planned around situations that OG might find it difficult to deal with in a classroom setting. Some difficulties are too ingrained to solve at this stage and therefore OG has been given a fresh start with a new teacher in some subjects, for example English. OG is pleased with this outcome and feels more comfortable in his lessons as a result.

Whilst no formal feedback has been gathered, OG has told me verbally that he finds the Social Stories sessions useful and that it helps him to imagine how different people in different situations can feel. Most of the sessions are aimed to develop his sense of empathy and this is something we are still working on. OG has been issued less detentions this year, which could be partly attributed to the Social Stories workshops.

In addition to this I created a 'One Page Profile' for OG to help teachers understand his needs. This has been a powerful tool and many teachers have appreciated the support with OG as his behaviour can be very difficult to deal with.

Eventually, I hope that the provision put in place will act as a preventative as opposed to reactive measure to help OG and his teachers build a positive relationship so that OG can achieve the good grades he is capable of at GCSE next year.

Sherwell Valley

1. JH is in our nursery and has only been recently diagnosed. Mum has found the diagnosis quite stressful and worrying. During a meeting, she mentioned that she would love to talk to other parents of children with Autism as one of her biggest concerns was how J would move through our school. I suggested a coffee morning for all our parents which would be an informal and relaxed time to have these discussions. This has proved really popular with all our parents and the first one is happening just before half term. It will be attended by both me and the SENCO and my hope is that our parents can discuss and ask questions of both each other and us, with the help of some coffee and biscuits!

2. KM is currently in Year 2 and can into Reception with his diagnosis. I previously taught K in both Reception and Year 1, so know him well. Over the last few months K's behaviour has deteriorated and his teacher came to me for help. I had a discussion with the teacher and quickly established that his home life is going through a difficult time and that his usual 1:1 is on long term sick leave. I have now re-established his reward chart that worked well for him previously, as well as allowing him time to come out of class. He loves cars and trucks, so when he needs some time, he can come and play with the cars in my classroom. I am also having regular drop in sessions with him to see how he is getting on. K's teacher has reported that there has been an increasing improvement in his behaviour, however he is still struggling. I am continuing to monitor him.

3. PG is in Year 5 currently and has a 1:1. His parents have expressed quite strong concerns about him going to secondary school. The main one is choosing the correct school for P as he is a shy and reserved boy who can struggle to make friends. The SENCO and I set up a meeting to discuss his transition to secondary school and I took some of the AET resources (a parents and carers guide to finding a school) to show his parents. I asked them to take them away and have a look and then we are meeting again in the spring term. I also suggested that I could come with them on some of the open days and I also gave them the names of the other Autism Champions in the secondary schools they were interested in. The parents went away more confident and I hope we can continue to help them in their decision.

Oldway Primary School

In a Stay and Play session, for our pupils who have autism and their parents, difficulties with transition from primary school to secondary school had been discussed. As part of my role of Autism Champion, I liaised with the Autism Champion at Brixham College, which has a specialist provision for pupils with autism, and arranged a visit for three of our Year 5 pupils and their parents. This was an extremely successful and positive experience for our pupils and a valuable opportunity for our parents to visit the school and the provision unit, meet key members of staff and ask any questions. Following the success of this visit, a parent had asked for another transition visit to Churston Grammar School, which again was a positive and successful visit and allowed the pupil and his mother to meet staff members and have a tour around the school. Due to the anxiety levels of these particular pupils, these transition visits were arranged for after school when the schools were quiet and not busy. Further transition visits will be arranged for these pupils throughout this academic year.

As part of my role of Autism Champion, I am now responsible for the performance management of key staff members who work directly with our pupils with autism. This has involved observing each staff member working with pupils, and providing support and resources for them. Two members of staff, who work directly with pupils with autism, had requested additional autism training as part of their performance management. Through the Autism Friendly schools' forum, three of these key staff have now attended Tier 2 Autism Education Trust training. This valuable training will enhance their knowledge and understanding, and provide support and resources when supporting our pupils with autism.

Eden Park

At the beginning of the year DC presented very challenging behaviours which posed a risk to himself (frequently running out of the building) and displayed very low self-esteem. Adults within the phase have been made aware of his needs, his risk assessment and ways to best support him. We have put into place 'box time' which is used in addition to a daily end of day treat (which must be earned and is related to being in the right place at the right time and doing the right thing) and regular brain breaks. Box time is used in the afternoon when DC has completed an appropriate amount of work. He has chosen what is in his box and can use what he likes during that time. We have also introduced an 'I'm amazing' book to boost his self-esteem. A social story has also been shared with him to help him to understand the danger he sometimes exposes himself to. Continuing from last year, he has a 'safe space' which he is encouraged to use once it is noticed that he is becoming anxious. He has a card to show adults to stop them from interacting with him while he is in a highly anxious state. DC also benefits from having quite a lot of adult support and has a particularly good relationship with one TA. All of these strategies combined have led to DC becoming more confident and showing risk-taking behaviours much less frequently. Writing was a subject that would once cause DC to become anxious as he would automatically assume that he wasn't any good at it and didn't want to fail. He now has a far more positive attitude towards writing and has even been heard to say, "I want to write!" This shows huge progress compared to the beginning of the year. In general he is now far calmer, uses his safe space less frequently and demonstrates risk-taking behaviour less frequently.

Churston Ferrers

JM has been struggling with friendships at school. His mother is considering pursuing a formal diagnosis, but is clear that something had to be done to support him and his peers in the short to medium term, diagnosed or not. I have structured a Lego Mindstorms club around JM and this has proven to be an effective way of allowing him to 'fit in' and experiment with different strategies that he might employ in order to work better with peers and get across his undoubted abilities in a more socially acceptable manner. A good relationship with JM has allowed me to take on a separate mentoring role so that we can explore ways of transferring his coping strategies to different school situations. Mum has reported the positive effect that the Lego club has had. Peers are also becoming far more accommodating and let certain behaviors go. Mum, JM and I have great hopes for ongoing mentoring.

Brixham College

L had a disrupted secondary school experience in KS3 and KS4, this led to him having increased anxiety and mental health issues. He came to us at Brixham College during Year 11 from an independent school out of area. He gained some 6 good GCSE results being mainly self-taught from January 2015. He started 6th Form in September 2016 based at Brixham College where he started Physics and Maths A-Level with Computer Science A-Level being studied at Churston Ferris Grammar School. He travels between the two sites by taxi.

L settled into 6th form quickly and exceeded our expectations with regard to his ability to cope with the change and being part of a mainstream school. By half term he was, however, struggling with three A levels and complicated time table arrangements. He was finding Maths particularly difficult. This was caused by gaps in his knowledge due to being self-taught at GCSE. As Autism Champion, I am able to provide L with a personalised service, speaking to him regularly each week. I liaised with 6th form staff directly, reminding them of the barriers L faces and could advise them of how best to approach them. I was in frequent contact with his mother to explain what was being done to support L and to allay her fears. I worked with the LA, L and his family to remove him from Maths lessons this year with the aim of getting L to do a third year of A-Level Study to do his Maths A-Level.

He will start a Further Maths GCSE this year to help fill the gaps in his knowledge and he will have one-on-one tutoring sessions to help with this. The extra time he has will be used for private study for his Maths and his other A-Levels. The timetable for Liam is as follows:

Year 12 – Complete As in Physics and Computer Science, start Further Maths GCSE,

Year 13 – Complete A-Level in Physics and Computer Science and GCSE in Further Maths,

Year 14 – Complete Maths A-Level and an additional qualification to be decided in Year 14 with Liam.

I worked with L to find a quiet space in the College where he felt comfortable to undertake his private study.

This has reduced L's anxiety and he is currently working at a 'B' Grade level in Physics and Computer Science. His attendance is 100% and his punctuality is excellent.

L spoke to the Autism Champions at their network meeting.

Extract from an email from L's mother:

'I am sending a quick hello with a big thank you for setting up LS with a future!

He's not been managing A-level maths owing to the great gaps in his learning - (I appreciate Mr W for his straightforwardness - if there is such a word!) - And Mr N *- oh! my gosh! He has been sooo busy sorting things, all coming into fruition with Liam this evening agreeing to the proposal. (do Higher Level at GCSE and then stay on an extra year for A-level maths ... L could not be persuaded to the idea through me - Mr N* sorted it!)

*Autism Champion