



VLC
Caring Education
SEN Information Report

Introduction

Changing the lives of children and young people through caring education

VLC is a small Independent School set up to provide education for those who struggle to access mainstream education. Some students attend VLC as an Alternative Provision to receive calm support to prepare for their return to mainstream. Others join our school roll and work with us for longer.

Driven by a caring and inclusive ethos, we believe that every child's life can be transformed through a caring approach to education.

All staff including school governance, Principal, Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the SENDCo (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Coordinator), Centre staff and support staff are committed to their roles in ensuring the very best provision for every pupil in our care no matter what their need. Students' needs can be met most effectively when teachers, parents and support agencies are carefully coordinated to result in joint working.

Please also refer to VLC's SEND Policy, which is available to download from our website.

You can also find out more information about Warwickshire's Local Offer on the website:
<http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/send>

Our whole school has a shared responsibility to monitor the progress of all students, to identify needs and when they arise, therefore allowing us to provide the appropriate targeted support. Every pupil who attends VLC has a bespoke Individual Learning Plan (ILP), informed by the EHCP (where relevant), recommendations from an Educational Psychologist (where relevant), information from current and previous educational settings, information from other professionals and our own baselines.

Name and contact details of key people leading SEND at VLC:

Interim Principal: Charly Skoppek charly.skoppek@vlceducation.com

Interim Deputy Principal: Joanne Price jo.price@vlceducation.com

SENDCo: Joanne Price jo.price@vlceducation.com

All staff have a good awareness of SEND. As a team of Centre Leaders and (HL)TAs there is a wide range of experience and expertise in supporting students with SEND.

The following information is set out as Key Questions about our SEN Provision.

Key Questions: VLC and its SEND provision

1. How does the school know if a young person needs extra help?
2. What does the school do once a young person's need has been identified and how are different kinds of special educational needs and disabilities provided for at VLC?
3. What is the expertise and training of staff, in relation to young people with SEND?
4. What exam access arrangements are there for students with SEND?
5. What are the arrangements for supporting young people with special educational needs in transferring between phases of education, or in preparing for adulthood (PFA) and independent living?
6. What are the arrangements for consulting with young people about their needs and involving them in their education?
7. How does the school evaluate the effectiveness of its provision for SEND students?
8. What activities are available for students with special educational needs, in addition to those available in accordance with the curriculum?
9. How does the governing board monitor SEND and the treatment of complaints from parents about the SEND provision?
10. The Local Offer for SEND: Links and contact details of services?

1. How does the school know if a young person needs extra help?

- Students come to VLC in several ways; referral by their current school; the Local Authority Education Inclusion Panel (EIP); or through a package agreed with SENDAR to meet needs set out in an EHCP.
- An understanding of the students' presenting, and documented needs are part of the consultation and provision planning.
- On agreeing a placement, we work in partnership with each pupil, their family, previous or current educational setting, any other professional agencies working with the pupil, the EHCP, any information from educational psychology reports, the Learner Information Form (LIF) provided on referral and our initial screening tests, including literacy, numeracy, emotional literacy and GCSE English and Maths (where relevant). We also use a skills audit and Gatesby benchmarks for Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) in KS4.
- Our transition process is bespoke for each pupil and allows us to learn about each young person who joins us, their needs and how we can best flex to meet them.
- Concerns raised by Centre staff and regular analysis of progress data. This includes monitoring of students' rate of academic progress, their attendance, health and well-being.
- Getting to know our young people and their needs by speaking to parents/carers on request and at review meetings.

2. What does the school do once a young person's need has been identified?

- By the nature of our provision, all students who attend VLC have a profile of needs which requires additional support. For this reason, we do not hold a separate SEN register. Instead, every pupil will have their own ILP and the SENDCo and senior staff will help to advise on these where needed.
- Centre Leaders will discuss a student's needs with their parents/carers; then along with the pupil, agree the next steps and put support in place;
- Where needed, parents are informed of any further significant concerns and are asked to give permission for additional assessments from an external agency; or to seek consultation on flexing the student's curriculum and timetable.
- VLC Educational Psychologist, STS or SEND Support-ed specialist staff may also be requested to assess students' learning needs, from Year 9 onwards these assessments can also be used to identify eligibility for exam access arrangements.

- External agency reports produced are copied to parents and where needed, a discussion may take place to explore the findings and any recommendations for additional support in school and at home.
- We also commission assessments and follow up work from Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Therapists or Specialist Teachers where a need is identified by VLC staff or is specified in an EHCP.
- By the very nature of our centres, all learning is personalised for the needs of our students who all arrive with a high level of need.
- All students are supported by very small group work or 1 : 1 teaching which caters for appropriate levels of challenge and scaffolding to support learning;
- Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are created for students identified needs, to inform and support staff in their planning and approaches used in school;
- VLC tracks and monitors pupil progress and staff and work with the SENDCo to determine further support where needed;
- VLC are flexible in evidencing student progress according to their needs.
- VLC works with commissioners (schools and the Local Authority) to identify provision required in an even more bespoke manner than that offered by our standard provision;
- Any pupil who holds an EHCP will have bespoke provision identified in section F, which will form the basis for the ILP.
- EHCPs are provided for by the Local Authority for children whose learning needs are severe, complex and lifelong or require a high level of provision which is 'additional and different to' that available in the school to all students (e.g. this could be a high level of ongoing intervention and specialist involvement).
- Where a pupil does not hold an EHCP and application is deemed appropriate, Needs Assessment is carried out by Warwickshire's SEND Assessment and Reviewing (SENDAR) service. The outcome of a Needs Assessment may be the drafting and issuing of an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). More information on this process can be found on the Local Authority website.

3. What is the expertise and training of staff, in relation to young people with SEND?

- All of our centres are lead by highly experienced qualified teachers. We have a high number of qualified, specialist teachers in our staff team. All staff are highly experienced in working with young people and a passion for working with students who struggle to access mainstream education.
- The Interim Principal is Charly Skoppek. She has worked at VLC since 2017. She is passionate about facilitating all children to overcome barriers to learning in order to succeed, and offering a therapeutic, holistic and gentle approach to teaching. Charly is currently studying towards a PhD looking at the experiences of young people who have experienced trauma and exclusion throughout education.
- The SENDCo is Joanne Price (BA, PGCE, NSA). She has a background working as a Teaching Assistant in a Special School, then qualified as a teacher in 2000. Joanne has worked in three different secondary schools in the role of Teacher, Head of KS3 History, SENDCo, Assistant Principal and as the Lead for a Resourced Provision for students with complex needs and barriers to accessing mainstream education settings. She has been a SENDCo since 2007 and successfully completed the National SENDCo Award in 2010 and is committed to ensuring that students' needs are met.

4. What exam access arrangements are there for students with SEND?

- The SENDCo works with specialist teachers or our Educational Psychologist where additional assessment or evidence is required to apply for exam arrangements (in Years 10-11) for identified students that meet the exam regulator's criteria (for example; separate room, a

reader, word processor, extra time or rest breaks); required evidence can be obtained from an EHCP, specialist assessments and centre based record of needs and normal way of working.

- We use Tutors and Exams to facilitate students' access to their examinations.

5. What are the arrangements for supporting young people with special educational needs in transferring between phases of education, or in preparing for adulthood and independent living?

- Transition from Year 6 to Year 7 or at any point into VLC (as well as between phases of key stage (KS) such as KS2-3, KS3-4, KS4-5) is planned on an individual basis depending on students' circumstances and needs. Our staff will meet students and parents to plan a bespoke transition and induction to VLC.
- This means we meet students and parents, liaise with primary or previous schools, any relevant professionals working with the young person and their family to gather a good understanding of the student and how to approach their transition. Usually this is a gradual process with small steps and induction visits.
- SLT, the SENDCo or Centre Leader will also attend any multi-agency meetings such as transition reviews, CIN or Early Help meetings to discuss what provision will look like at VLC. Our staff will communicate with any specialist services involved to ensure a smooth transition at any stage that a student with SEND transfers to VLC.
- We work closely with the students, their parents/carers in Year 9 to agree on an appropriate KS4 curriculum. Within our resources we aim to flex to offer a range of qualifications alongside GCSEs, such as Functional Skills, NCFE Level 1 and 2 certificates and AQA Unit Awards to meet individual needs.
- **Preparing for Adulthood (PFA)** is a key aspect of our caring curriculum and our intention is for students to move on from VLC with rounded personal, academic, life and employment skills to access paid work and successfully access community services and activities; with increasing independence. We work to develop awareness and skills through PSHE and Careers work in Years 7-9; then from Year 9 to 11 we provide targeted mentoring sessions in PFA to work on specific skills or actions as identified by our staff, the students, and their families, their EHCP (if relevant). These sessions are also informed by using audit tools such as 'Skills Builder', 'Talkabout Teenagers' and programmes such as Destination Dream Job. Work completed by students and work experience can also be accredited with AQA Unit awards and/ or a certificate in Employability Skills.
- At VLC, we use the Gatsby Benchmarks to guide and develop our careers provision. Our offer is constantly evolving as we build new and exciting links with local businesses, colleges and universities. We ensure that students have the following:
- **Character Education** - this happens not only through our PSHE and SMSC curriculum, but each pupil who comes to us is screened in emotional literacy and a bespoke package is put into place according to need. This helps our young people build the personal skills they need for their future careers.
- **Self-Awareness and Development** - many of our students lack aspiration and inspiration for their futures. Students at VLC learn about their skills and strengths and how to celebrate these (please see our Relationships and Praise policy). The SkillsBuilder audit and follow up session resources are used to support students to develop personal and communication skills ready for the world of work.
- **Career Exploration** - We use our careers schemes to help our students research a variety of careers in KS3 and 4. At KS4, all of our young people have fortnightly 1:1 sessions with either a groundwork mentor or our own careers advisor, Julia. Our KS4 programme, "Destination Dream Job", designed by Kerry Low helps our students to explore their skills, dreams and aspirations and find the very best route.

- **Raising Career Aspirations & Career Management** - We actively challenge preconceptions about potential careers based on gender and previous understanding of further and higher education. Our list of linked colleges and universities is growing. And potential for in person visits is becoming more possible as Covid restrictions relax. We have a range of industries who visit us to talk about their work and help our students to understand the huge variety of opportunities available to them in the work place.
- **Support with researching and applying for GCSE, Post 16 (Further Education, Higher Education, Apprenticeships and Employment Opportunities)** – regular check-ins and specific support sessions with Julia (VLC careers mentor) and Verity from 'Groundworks' ensure that each of our students is given significant 1:1 help to apply for their choices for further education. VLC staff familiar with our students and the process of moving on to post 16 education or training will then support students with preparation for visits, applications, interviews and transition work with their next setting.
- **Employability Skills (CV, Mock Interview & Work experience)** - we aim (within the limitations of pupil risk assessments and Covid restrictions), to help students on our school roll access to relevant work experience during their time in KS4.

6. What are the arrangements for consulting with young people about their needs and involving them in their education?

- Adult to Student ratio at VLC means that adult support is readily available if they are concerned or need help in any way;
- Our relational approach enables students to build trust with consistent adults to be able to share their thoughts and feelings;
- Student views are encouraged in daily conversations with VLC staff who become trusted and appropriate adults.
- Student and Parent views are core to how we work. In addition to ews are sought prior to meetings and wherever possible students attend their review meetings;
- The Centre Leaders are key workers for students and facilitate communication with other staff, or students, to support their views to be heard. Student and Parent voice surveys are conducted periodically to inform our reflective practice and whole school improvement;
- Students are supported to be able to select learning challenges and choices of task based on their starting point; to use a visual indicator e.g. Red, Green bands/cards or Zones of Regulation to indicate their understanding or their level of emotional regulation to the teacher or TA during the session, and some individuals agree their own signal with adult staff to communicate their need for help.

7. How does the school evaluate the effectiveness of its provision for SEND students?

- As advised by the SEND Code of Practice (2014), students with SEND are tracked and monitored using the same data systems. Contextual information is provided alongside this data where needed.
- The Principal and Deputy Principal discuss student progress with the Centre Leaders and SENDCo. This is focused on individual performance across the school core curriculum (English, Maths, Emotional Literacy, PSHE and SMSC) and students' bespoke subject choices. This information is used to inform planning and interventions alongside assessments as part of the Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR) process in line with the Code of Practice.
- VLC staff reflect on the impact of learning activities and interventions; they keep ILPs updated each half term and provide information on progress towards desired outcomes, for meetings and reviews.
- VLC staff will make appointments with parents/carers to ensure there are opportunities to discuss and review provision each term, in line with the Code of Practice. Specific outcomes

are reviewed at annual meetings (more if needed) as part of the EHCP process or Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for Children who are Looked After.

- Interim and emergency review meetings are held where there are indicators that provision is not meeting needs – this can be raised by school staff, parents/carers, or other agencies;
- We regularly commission an SEN consultant and welcome working in partnership with other schools, local business and SEND organisations, to reflect on and share expertise, resources, and good practice.
- The SLT and curriculum leads, and SENCO carry out visits to each learning centre to quality assure implementation of the curriculum and SEN support systems as set out in EHCPs and ILPs. This process is used to support teachers and students in the classroom.
- Student voice surveys are conducted periodically by the school to identify areas of strength and for further development.
- Parent/ Carers and key adults are invited once a term minimum in to the centre to see student work and speak to staff as part of an afternoon tea event.

8. What activities are available for students with special educational needs, in addition to those available in accordance with the curriculum?

- At VLC students are offered an enriched curriculum of physical, sensory and therapeutic activities to promote emotional regulation, improved self esteem and resilience, good physical and mental wellbeing. This is through active learning where possible and each student is offered activities such as outdoor learning, bootcamp fitness, cooking, bowling, using a local gym and swimming. Trips to the countryside, hill climbing in the Peak District, theatre and museums are also organised on a regular basis.

9. How does the governing board monitor SEND and the treatment of complaints from parents about the SEND provision?

- The Governing Body meet regularly and hold the SLT and all staff to account for meeting the needs of students and maintaining good working rapport with parents/carers and other relevant agencies and linked businesses. Governors will review and ask questions based on reports, visits, inclusion and academic data.
- The Complaints policy and form is available on the VLC website; the aims of the policy are to: Encourage the resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible; Ensure that concerns are dealt with quickly, fully and fairly and within clearly defined time limits; • Provide effective responses and appropriate redress; Maintain good working relationships between all people involved with VLC. A summary of the various stages is given below:
 - Stage 0 - Informal discussion and resolution with member of staff
 - Stage 1 - Referral to and investigation by Principal
 - Stage 2 - Referral to and investigation by a VLC Trustee
 - Stage 3 - Referral to and review by a VLC Trustees Complaints Panel

10. The Local Offer for SEND: Links and contact details of services.

- **SEND Offer in Warwickshire:** <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/send>
- **SENDIAS:** (Support for Parents of young people with SEND)
<https://www.kids.org.uk/warwickshire-sendias-front-page> Phone: 024 7636 6054;
E-mail warwickshire@kids.org.uk
- **Family Information Service:** fis@warwickshire.gov.uk Phone 01926 742274
Twitter – @WarksFIS Facebook – [Warwickshire Family Information Service](#)
- **(SENDAR) SEND Assessment & Reviewing Service:** sen@warwickshire.gov.uk Phone: 01926 742160