



SEND MAG AZINE

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Our Inclusion Teams



Central Trust Team

Rachel Sharples – Trust Vice Principal



Alder Tree Primary Academy

Louise Reavey – Assistant Principal and SENDCo



Leeds City Academy

Francesca Sharpe – Assistant Principal Inclusion & SENDCo

Dee Danahay – Assistant SENDCo

Lisa Arundale – Link Manager



Leeds East Academy

Emma Tyldsley – Vice Principal Inclusion

Harmesh Singh – SENDCo

Elizabeth Henderson – Assistant SENDCo

Kimberley Cross – Assistant SENDCo

Sara Zaman – Bridge Manager



Leeds West Academy

Lindsay Bishop West – Director of SEND and SENDCo

Beth Sanderson – Vice Principal Inclusion

Rachel Dodds – Assistant SENDCo

Tara Crawford – Assistant SENDCo

SEND Link Governors

Dr Jabir Alshehabi Al-Ani – Alder Tree Primary

Jane Ball – Leeds City Academy

David Joyce – Link Governor for SEND

Dan Evans – Leeds West Academy



1

Buzz

West Yorkshire Playhouse

BUZZ projects and workshops are designed especially for young people aged 14 to 25 years old with learning disabilities.

[Find Out More](#)

2

Clip n' Climb Leeds

Leeds Clip n' Climb are passionate to share their ethos around inclusion for all! Fully assisted SEND

Climbing available.

[Find Out More](#)

3

Dance Action Zone Leeds (DAZLO)

DAZL has a commitment to providing an inclusive dance offer within schools and community dance groups across the city, DAZL is member of the Include Network which draws together representatives from cultural groups across the city. For children age 3 upwards.

[Find Out More](#)

4

Energise by Endorphins

Whether it is dance, drama, arts & crafts, gaming, or other games and activities, Energise provide safe and supportive inclusive sessions, a great way for child with SEND and young people to have fun, make friends and flourish.

[Find Out More](#)

5

Geeks Room

Geeks Room provide an inclusive centre offering services such as short breaks, weekend sessions, after school clubs, social sessions and much more. Using their top-of-the-range facilities including PlayStation, Xbox, Nintendo, Custom Gaming PC, Car Simulator and VR (HTC Vive, PSVR, Oculus, Nintendo VR) headsets, among others.

[Find Out More](#)

6

LaserZone

LaserZone want to make sure everyone is included - they understand that some of their guests would prefer a calmer experience whilst playing, so they run dedicated SEND sessions every month with some adjustments to the games.

[Find Out More](#)

7

Made with Music

Made with Music run fully accessible, family friendly mini-gigs at the Brudenell Social Club where you can listen to live music with family and friends in a safe environment. Sessions are carefully planned to make them accessible and inclusive for as many people as possible.

[Find Out More](#)

8

Northern Ballet Inclusive Dance

All Northern Ballets workshops and projects are fully inclusive, they also run activities specifically designed for disabled people, offering the space and support to explore dance in their own way.

[Find Out More](#)

9

Oxygen Free jumping Peaceful Play

Oxygen Free Jumping are aware that going to a standard Freejumping session can be a challenge for Freejumpers on the autistic spectrum, or with sensory or learning disabilities. With this in mind, weekly Peaceful Play sessions are for specially designed to be all the fun of a Freejump, just a little more peacefully.

[Find Out More](#)

10

Penny Press

Calling all young people who want to have their own articles, reviews and artwork published. A space to be creative, develop skills and meet new people. For students aged 14+

[Find Out More](#)

11

BoomChikkaBoom! Family Rave

The ultimate summer disco. Spellbinding songs, disco lights, bubbles, snow machines, parachute games and pom poms. Get ready to sing, shout and dance about. Locations across Leeds.

[Find Out More](#)

12

Breeze in the Park

Interactive play system, arts zone, fun fair and classic inflatables. Breeze in the Park 2026 dates are coming soon. Their website will be updated as soon as new dates and locations are announced.

[Find Out More](#)

13

Craft a Cardboard Game: Leeds City Museum

Get crafty with Leeds City Museum. There'll be a pick and mix of recyclable materials. Perhaps you'll make a cardboard hoopla ring toss, or design your very own puzzle. Tue 4th Aug – Thur 6th Aug from 10am.

[Find Out More](#)

14

Hyde Park Picture House Autism Friendly Screenings

Hyde and Seek screenings are more informal than our regular screenings, so if you and your children need to roam around the auditorium at points – don't be afraid to!

[Find Out More](#)

15

Leeds SEND Youth Council

A group of young people aged 11 to 25 years old with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) who live in Leeds or attend school in Leeds. They work on campaigns and projects they are passionate about and contribute to improving SEND services for young people in Leeds.

[Find Out More](#)

SUMMER ACTIVITIES



Support Networks

1

Alder Tree Primary

Tuesday 16th September 2026
SEND parents meetings

2

Alder Tree Primary

Friday 16th October 2026
Pupil Passports shared with parents

3

Alder Tree Primary

Tuesday 10th November 2026
Speech and Language therapist drop in sessions for parents

4

Leeds City Academy

Tuesday 29th September 2026
Year 7 SEND Engagement Evening

5

Leeds City Academy

Tuesday 1st December 2026
Year 9 SEND Options Evening

6

Leeds City Academy

Week Commencing 7th December 2026
Pupil Passport Review Days

7

Leeds East Academy

Wednesday 16th September 2026
3:15pm – 4:15pm SEND Clinic

8

Leeds West Academy

Tuesday 20th October
3.15pm - 4.00pm
Inclusion Hub intervention showcase

9

Leeds West Academy

Monday 7th December and Tuesday 8th December 2026 (all day)
Student Support Plan (SSP) review days

10

Leeds for Learning

Wednesday 11th November
10am to 11:30am or 5pm to 6:30pm
Emotional Well-being for students with Autism. Exploring why autistic children are at greater risk of poor mental health, the causes and support mechanisms. Book your place by emailing leedsforlearning@leeds.gov.uk

11

Leeds for Learning

Wednesday 3rd March 10am-11:30am or 5pm to 6:30pm
Sensory Support in the Home: An introduction to sensory processing and regulation, exploring its importance in supporting the wellbeing of autistic children. Offering advice around sensory support strategies that can be implemented in the home. Book your place by emailing leedsforlearning@leeds.gov.uk

12

Leeds for Learning

Wednesday 5th May 10am-11:30am or 5pm to 6:30pm
Keeping Autistic Children Safe Online: Explore the importance of online media to autistic identity and wellbeing – to build positive connections and communities and how to monitor safe use of online platforms and understand vulnerabilities when young people access these. Book your place by emailing leedsforlearning@leeds.gov.uk

Say hello to...

Emma Tyldsley

I'm absolutely thrilled to be joining Leeds East Academy as Vice Principal. My journey in education began at the University of Leeds, where I studied History, Theology and Religious Studies before completing my PGCE in teaching Religious Education. Teaching dance from a young age first sparked my love of learning and coaching, a passion that has stayed with me ever since. It also shaped my belief that every young person deserves to feel confident, valued and able to understand their place in an ever changing world.

Over the years, I've been fortunate to work in leadership roles at Bruntcliffe School, Cockburn School and Benton Park with an inclusion focus in each role being paramount to school improvement. Across these experiences, I've developed a strong commitment to our most vulnerable learners and the Quality of Education, always guided by the belief that every child deserves the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their starting point. Much of my work has involved supporting students who face barriers to learning—helping them build self regulation, develop resilience and stay engaged



in their education. I've also led on curriculum development and teaching and learning, ensuring that classrooms are places where high expectations, strong routines and meaningful relationships enable students to achieve their very best. I am most excited about working with the wider inclusion team at Leeds East Academy particularly with the amazing provisions we have in place to support our learners in their educational progress. We are very lucky to

have Thrive, Connect, Bridge and Balance provisions to support a wide range of learners with bespoke pathways to achieve their next steps beyond the academy.

I look forward to meeting more of our students and their families over their five-year journey with us, a big thank you to everyone who has made me feel welcome so far!

Student Voice

Celebrating the voices of our pupils. It shares what students across the trust have enjoyed, achieved, and felt proud of this year.

Every experience is different, and every voice matters. These reflections highlight the moments that made school meaningful for our children and young people.

What Our Students Say



School helps me learn new things every day. Carson.



I like school because I can learn and play with my friends. Poppy.



My teacher helps me do my best Harrison.



I've enjoyed coming to school more this year because I feel happier and more confident. The support from staff has helped me believe in myself and try new things.



The help I've received this year has made a big difference to my learning. I'm more independent, take part in lessons more often, and am proud of what I've achieved.



I've enjoyed learning in a supportive environment where I feel listened to. It has helped me overcome challenges and make good progress.



We went on a trip to Eureka with the Bridge. It was a lot of fun. Maiya



I went to Ninja Warriors this year, I loved going on the bouncy castle. Evan



The drop-down day was really cool. I learned a lot about keeping ourselves safe; it was really interesting. Sania



I like the outside Inclusion courtyard, especially at lunchtime as we get fresh air on quiet lunch club. Lexi.



I like to use the sensory room during the day, I like to go in the middle of the bean bags and feel the sequin frames and make patterns. Riley.



I like the Learning Room in the Inclusion Hub. Sometimes lessons get overwhelming, and having this area can help me focus and get back to learning so I do not miss out. Alice.

What We Are Proud Of



I am proud that I can read more confidently and help others in class. Alfie



I am proud that I keep trying even when my work is hard. Leo



I am proud that I am becoming more independent and making good choices. Rayhan



I'm proud of how I've managed challenges this year and not given up when things have been difficult.



I'm proud of the person I've become this year. I'm more resilient, confident and ready for the next stage of my education.



I'm proud that I've improved my attendance and come to school ready to learn every day.



I have worked really hard to build my resilience this year. Maiya



My typing skills have really developed; I can type without even looking at the keyboard! Evan



My writing skills have developed well, particularly my creative writing. Sania



I am proud of my progress in the Lexia intervention – I have got another certificate for moving up another level! Schyler



I am proud that I have managed to increase my attendance in school. It is hard on some days, but I am doing it! Lexi

Our Year in Photos



Next Year We are Looking Forward To...



I am looking forward to learning new things and meeting my new teacher next year. Leo



I am looking forward to making new friends and trying new activities next year. Nayef



I am looking forward to growing my confidence and taking on new challenges next year. Kysha



I'm looking forward to meeting new people, making new friends, and being part of the school community.



I'm looking forward to becoming more confident and pushing myself out of my comfort zone.



This year I've become more resilient and learned how to overcome challenges. Next year, I'm excited to use these skills to achieve my goals.



I am looking forward to picking my options next year. Evan



I am looking forward to developing in my role as a LEADER and picking my options. Sania



I am looking forward to my new lessons. Charlie



I am looking forward to doing more interactive and practical lessons next year. I love drama! I am also excited for English lessons next year. Lexi



I am looking forward to covering new topics next year in lessons. Laurel



I am looking forward to next year as it is my last one in school. I can't for it to be at this time next year, having done all my exams. Looking back to how it started, it's exciting to get to the end. Luke

Moving to Secondary School

For many families, the move from primary to secondary school is an exciting milestone. It is also one of the biggest changes a child will experience during their school years.

New buildings, new teachers, different routines, larger year groups and increased independence can bring both excitement and anxiety, particularly for children and young people with SEND.

The good news is that there are many ways families can help make the transition smoother.



It's Normal to Feel Nervous

Many children worry about:

- Getting lost
- Finding classrooms
- Making new friends
- Managing homework
- Meeting lots of new teachers
- Changes to routines

Parents often have worries too. Remember that transition is a process rather than a single event. Most children need time to adjust and settle into their new environment.

Talk About the Positives

Alongside discussing concerns, encourage conversations about opportunities.

Ask questions such as:

- What are you most looking forward to?
- Is there a subject you are excited to study?
- What clubs or activities might you like to try?
- What new skills would you like to learn?

Helping your child focus on both the challenges and the opportunities can build confidence.

Practise New Routines

The summer holidays are a great time to develop some of the skills that support a successful transition.

You could practise:

- Following a visual timetable
- Organising belongings
- Packing a school bag
- Using a planner or calendar
- Following morning and evening routines
- Managing small responsibilities independently

Small steps now can make September feel more familiar.

Visit and Familiarise

Look at photographs and maps provided by the school.

Some children benefit from:

- Looking at key locations such as classrooms, toilets and lunch areas
- Following a virtual tour
- Creating a photo booklet
- Using social stories to explain what a typical day may look like

Familiarity often reduces anxiety. The transition pages on our school websites will help remind your child of what to expect and key adults they can turn to for support.

Looking Ahead

The first few weeks of secondary school are a time of adjustment. There may be moments of uncertainty alongside moments of success.

Celebrate small achievements:

- Finding the correct classroom
- Managing a new routine
- Joining a club
- Making a new friend
- Asking for help when needed



Key Adults

If your child is joining a WRAT school in September help them to families themselves with the following key adults in school.



Mr Chattoe
Principal



Ms Sharpe
SENDCo



Ms Rhodes
Year Manager



Mr Ayres
Principal



Mr Singh
SENDCo



Mr Powell
Year Manager



Mr Pocock
Principal



Ms Bishop-West
SENDCo



Mr Marshall
Year Manager



Ms Malloy
LCA Careers



Ms Brooke
LEA Careers



Ms Dawes
LWA Careers

Every achievement is a step towards confidence and independence.
Secondary school is not just a new building, it is the beginning of an exciting new chapter.
With preparation, patience and support, most children go on to thrive in their new environment.

Preparing for Adulthood

For parents of young people aged 14–16, thoughts about the future may be starting to feel more real.

Questions about further education, employment, independence and adult life can sometimes feel overwhelming. However, preparing for adulthood is not about having all the answers immediately. It is about helping young people gradually build the skills, confidence and experiences they need for the future.

Every young person's journey will be different, and success looks different for everyone.

What Does “Preparing for Adulthood” Mean?

Preparing for adulthood focuses on helping young people develop skills in four key areas:

Employment and Careers

Helping young people explore their interests, strengths and aspirations.

This might include:

- Discussing career ideas
- Learning about different jobs
- Taking part in work-related activities
- Exploring volunteering opportunities
- Developing workplace skills such as communication and teamwork

- The aim is not to choose a career immediately, but to begin thinking about future possibilities.

Independent Living

Developing independence is often a gradual process.

Skills may include:

- Managing personal belongings
 - Preparing simple meals
 - Using money safely
 - Planning journeys
 - Managing personal care
 - Making choices and decisions
- Every new skill builds confidence and resilience.

Community Participation

Feeling connected to a community is an important part of adult life.

Encourage opportunities to:

- Join clubs or groups
 - Participate in sports or hobbies
 - Volunteer locally
 - Attend community events
 - Build friendships outside school
- These experiences help develop confidence, social skills and a sense of belonging.

Health and Wellbeing

Young people benefit from understanding how to manage their own wellbeing.

This can include:

- Recognising emotions
- Asking for support when needed

- Developing healthy routines
- Building self-advocacy skills
- Understanding personal strengths and needs

Learning to speak up about what helps them succeed is a valuable life skill.

Focus on Strengths

It is easy to become focused on what a young person finds difficult. Preparing for adulthood works best when we also focus on strengths, interests and talents.

Ask yourself:

- What does my child enjoy?
- What are they good at?
- What motivates them?
- What would they like their future to include?

The answers to these questions can help shape meaningful goals.

Building Confidence Through Experience

Summer is an excellent time to practise real-life skills.

Simple activities might include:

- Ordering food in a café
 - Planning a family outing
 - Managing a small budget
 - Travelling short distances with support
 - Helping with shopping
 - Preparing a family meal
- These everyday experiences often provide some of the most valuable learning opportunities.

Understanding EHCP Reviews

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), you may hear people talk about "annual reviews" and wonder exactly what they involve.

For some families, EHCP reviews can feel daunting. There can be paperwork to complete, reports to read and meetings to attend. However, the review process is designed to ensure that your child's support continues to meet their needs and helps them make progress towards their goals.

Understanding what to expect can help you feel more confident and prepared.

What Is an EHCP Review?

Every EHCP must be reviewed at least once a year.

The annual review is an opportunity for everyone involved in supporting your child to come together and discuss:

- What's going well
- What progress has been made
- Any challenges your child is experiencing
- Whether outcomes and targets remain appropriate
- Whether the provision in the EHCP is meeting your child's needs
- Any changes that may be needed for the future

The review should focus on your child's strengths, achievements, aspirations and next steps.

Who Is Involved?

The review usually includes:

- Parents and carers
- Your child or young person (where appropriate)
- School staff
- The SENDCO
- Professionals involved in supporting your child, such as therapists, educational psychologists or health professionals
- Representatives from the local authority, where required

Not everyone will attend in person, but reports may be submitted to contribute to the discussion.

What Happens Before the Meeting?

Before the review, you will usually receive paperwork asking for your views.

This is your opportunity to share:

- Your child's achievements
- Any concerns you may have
- Changes at home that may affect your child
- Your hopes for the coming year
- Long-term aspirations for your child

Many schools also gather views directly from children and young people, ensuring their voice is included in the process.

A helpful tip is to make notes throughout the year about successes, concerns and questions. This can make completing review paperwork much easier.

During the Review Meeting

The meeting should be a collaborative discussion focused on your child.

Topics often include:



Progress Towards Outcomes

The team will discuss the progress your child has made since the previous review.

Remember that progress is not always measured through academic attainment alone. Improvements in communication, emotional regulation, independence, social skills and confidence are equally important.

Current Support

The review will consider whether the support currently in place is helping your child to succeed. Questions may include:

- Is the provision meeting their needs?
- Are there any barriers to learning?
- Have needs changed since the EHCP was written?
- Are additional strategies required?

Future Planning

The review should also look ahead. For younger children, this may involve planning for the next academic year.

For older students, discussions may focus on transition, independence, further education, employment and preparing for adulthood.

Transition Reviews

Some annual reviews are particularly important because they involve a transition to a new setting. These may include:

- Starting primary school

- Moving to secondary school
- Transitioning to post-16 education or training

Transition reviews help ensure that information is shared effectively and that support continues smoothly during periods of change.

After the Review

Following the meeting, a report will be produced and sent to the local authority.

The local authority must then decide whether to:

- Maintain the EHCP as it is
- Amend the EHCP
- Cease the EHCP
- Parents should receive written confirmation of the decision.

If amendments are proposed, families will have an opportunity to review and comment on any changes.

Your Voice Matters

As a parent or carer, you know your child best.

The annual review is your opportunity to celebrate achievements, share concerns and contribute to future planning. Your views are an important part of the process and should be listened to and respected.

Don't feel that you need to be an expert in SEND law or education. Simply sharing your experiences, observations and aspirations for your child can provide valuable information that helps shape effective support.

Top Tips for Parents

- Read reports before the meeting and make notes.
- Write down any questions you want to ask.
- Think about your child's strengths as well as their needs.
- Consider what support is working well.
- Share your hopes and aspirations for the future.
- Remember that the review is a partnership focused on helping your child succeed.

Questions You Might Want to Ask at Your Child's EHCP Review

- What progress has my child made this year?
- Which strategies have been most effective?
- What should we focus on next year?
- How is my child's voice being included?
- Are there opportunities to develop independence and life skills?
- What preparations are being made for future transitions?

A Final Thought

An EHCP review is much more than a meeting. It is an opportunity to reflect on progress, celebrate achievements and plan for the future.

By working together, families, schools and professionals, we can ensure that every child and young person receives the support they need to thrive, both in school and beyond.

SEND Summer Challenge

Summer Bingo

Can you complete a line, a full house, or even the whole board?

It's okay to adapt any challenge to suit your needs. The goal is participation, not perfection.

Read a book	Help prepare a meal	Visit a park or green space	Try a new food	Play a board game
Create some artwork	Go on a nature walk	Tell someone something you are proud of	Listen to your favourite music	Learn a new skill
Make someone smile	FREE SPACE	Build something with Lego blocks or recycled materials	Spend time outdoors	Help with a household job
Visit a library	Complete a puzzle	Write a postcard or letter	Try a mindfulness activity	Take a photograph of something interesting
Play with a friend or family member	Learn 5 new words	Make a sensory activity	Visit somewhere new	Share your favourite summer memory

Bonus Challenges



Try something that feels a little challenging.



Spend a day reducing screen time.



Help someone in your family.



Create your own challenge and complete it.



Learn an interesting fact.

My Summer Achievements

This summer I am proud that I:



My Favourite Summer Moment

Draw a picture or write about your favourite memory from the holidays.



September Transition Checklist: Helping Your Child Start the New School Year with Confidence

The start of a new school year can bring a mix of excitement and anxiety for children and young people with SEND. Whether your child is starting a new class, moving school, or returning after the summer break, a little preparation can make September feel much more manageable.

This checklist is designed to help families focus on practical steps that support a calm and positive transition.

4 Weeks Before Term Starts

- ☐ Talk about the new school year in simple, positive language
- ☐ Look at photos of the new classroom, teachers, or school building
- ☐ Reintroduce a basic routine (bedtimes, mealtimes, morning structure)
- ☐ Practise getting dressed in school clothes or uniform
- ☐ Check uniform, shoes, PE kit, and labels are ready
- ☐ Create or update a visual timetable if helpful
- ☐ Discuss any worries your child may have

Top tip: Keep conversations short and regular rather than overwhelming your child with lots of information at once.

2–3 Weeks Before Term Starts

- ☐ Do a “practice run” of the school morning routine
- ☐ Walk or travel the school route if possible
- ☐ Reintroduce lunchbox or snack routines
- ☐ Practise using a school bag and packing/unpacking it
- ☐ Begin reducing holiday sleep patterns gradually
- ☐ Identify any sensory needs (noise, clothing, transitions) and plan supports
- ☐ Share any updated information with school if needed

1 Week Before Term Starts

- ☐ Lay out uniform and equipment ready for the first day
- ☐ Create a clear countdown to help with predictability
- ☐ Talk through what the first day will look like
- ☐ Reassure your child about who will meet them at school
- ☐ Plan calm activities in the final days of the holidays
- ☐ Prepare any comfort items (fidget tools, sensory aids, etc.)

Top tip: Avoid last-minute changes where possible. Predictability helps reduce anxiety.

The Night Before

- ☐ Check uniform, bag, lunch and PE kit are ready
- ☐ Use a visual or written morning plan
- ☐ Keep bedtime calm and consistent
- ☐ Allow extra time for settling and reassurance
- ☐ Talk briefly about something positive for the next day
- ☐ Prepare yourself too, a calm adult helps create a calm child

First Day of Term

- ☐ Allow extra time in the morning
- ☐ Keep language calm, clear and reassuring
- ☐ Use visual supports if your child benefits from them
- ☐ Focus on small goals (e.g. "getting through the door")
- ☐ Celebrate effort, not just achievement
- ☐ Expect tiredness or emotional regulation needs after school

Remember: The first day is just the beginning of the transition, not the end goal.

First Few Weeks Back

- ☐ Keep home routines steady and predictable
- ☐ Build in downtime after school
- ☐ Check in with your child regularly about how they are feeling
- ☐ Celebrate small successes (getting ready, making friends, trying new tasks)
- ☐ Stay in contact with school if needed
- ☐ Be patient, settling can take time

Every child's transition looks different. Some settle quickly, while others need more time and support. Both are completely normal. Progress in September is not just about academics, it is about confidence, emotional security, relationships, and feeling safe in a new routine.

Summer Reading Recommendations: SEND-Friendly Books for Ages 4–16

Summer is a wonderful time to enjoy reading in a relaxed, pressure-free way. For children and young people with SEND, the “right” book is not about reading level alone, it's about interest, accessibility, enjoyment, and confidence. This guide includes suggestions across age ranges, as well as dyslexia-friendly and accessible formats to support all readers.

Ages 4–7: Building a Love of Stories

At this stage, reading is often shared with adults. Focus on repetition, rhythm, and engaging illustrations.

Recommended types of books:

- Picture books with clear, simple language
- Repetitive stories that support memory and prediction
- Interactive books with flaps, textures, or sound buttons

Great examples:

- We're Going on a Bear Hunt – Michael Rosen
- The Very Hungry Caterpillar – Eric Carle
- Oi Frog! – Kes Gray
- Dear Zoo – Rod Campbell

Top tip: Re-read favourite stories as many times as your child wants, repetition builds confidence and enjoyment.

Ages 8–11: Growing Confidence and Independence

Children at this stage may be reading more independently or still enjoying shared reading.

Recommended types of books:

- Short chapters with illustrations
- Humour-based stories
- Adventure and fantasy with clear plots
- Graphic novels for visual learners

Great examples:

- Dog Man series – Dav Pilkey
- Diary of a Wimpy Kid – Jeff Kinney
- The Worst Witch – Jill Murphy
- The Boy Who Grew Dragons – Andy Shepherd

Top tip: Graphic novels are a fantastic bridge for reluctant readers, supporting understanding through images as well as text.

Ages 12–16: Interests, Identity and Choice

Older children benefit from books that reflect their interests, experiences, and sense of identity.

Recommended types of books:

- Short, fast-paced novels
- Real-life stories and relatable characters
- Books with accessible layouts and clear formatting
- Non-fiction linked to hobbies or interests

Great examples:

- Holes – Louis Sachar
- Wonder – R.J. Palacio
- Geek Girl – Holly Smale
- Percy Jackson series – Rick Riordan

Top tip: Choice is key. Let young people decide what they want to read - even if it is not what you would expect.

Dyslexia-Friendly and Accessible Reading Options

Many children with SEND benefit from formats that reduce visual stress and support comprehension.

Dyslexia-Friendly Books

Look for:

- Cream or off-white paper
- Clear, sans-serif fonts
- Increased spacing between words and lines
- Short chapters and simple layouts
- Publishers such as Barrington Stoke specialise in accessible books designed for reluctant and dyslexic readers.

Audiobooks

Audiobooks support:

- Listening comprehension
- Vocabulary development
- Enjoyment without decoding pressure
- They can be used alongside physical books or independently.

eBooks and Reading Apps

Many devices allow:

- Font adjustments
- Background colour changes
- Text-to-speech tools
- Highlighting and tracking features

Encouraging Reading Over the Summer

- Keep reading sessions short and relaxed
- Share reading together rather than testing comprehension
- Visit local libraries for free access to books
- Let children choose their own reading material
- Celebrate effort and enjoyment, not accuracy

A Final Thought

Reading over the summer does not need to be structured or pressured. For many children with SEND, the most important goal is to maintain a positive relationship with books.

Whether it is listening to an audiobook, sharing a picture book, or reading a favourite story for the tenth time, every experience helps build confidence and enjoyment for the future.



STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND CPD.

As part of our commitment to deliver an exceptional, inclusive educational experience all teaching staff from across the Trust will have a shared developmental target focusing on ways in which we check the understanding of all students in lessons then adapt teaching to suit their needs. We are looking forward to sharing with our families' updates on ways in which we have developed this as the year progresses.

Our SEND Teams have been working to enhance their skills and knowledge surrounding best ways to support our children with SEND, we have included some case studies from colleagues from across the Trust below:

All Staff

Alder Tree Primary

Staff have attended Executive Functioning training delivered by our Educational Psychologist, enhancing their understanding of skills such as working memory, flexible thinking, and self-regulation. This training has supported staff in embedding practical strategies within the primary classroom to help pupils plan, organise, and manage their learning effectively. As a result, staff are better equipped to support pupils' independence, emotional regulation, and readiness to learn across the curriculum.

Link Team

Leeds City Academy

Staff have been learning Makaton as part of their ongoing professional development, with a focus on improving communication with pupils who use signs and symbols. This training has helped staff to create a more inclusive environment, enabling pupils to better express themselves and engage more fully in learning.

Thrive Staff

Leeds East Academy

Staff in Thrive have undertaken the Children and Young Persons Diabetes in School Practical Workshop at The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. This CPD training further provides support for some of our most vulnerable students at the Academy where staff are confident and knowledgeable about how to support pupils with diabetes.

Milla Taylor

Leeds West Academy

Milla has attended training for ESBA to plan for extended support offered for students who are experiencing Emotional School Based Avoidance. With new knowledge and expertise, Molly hopes to guide students who are experiencing difficulties returning to the academy.



YoungMinds Parents Helpline

Supporting parents and carers who are concerned about their child or young person's mental health. Their Helpline provides detailed advice and information, emotional support and signposting. You can speak to YoungMinds over the phone or can chat with them online.

Call YoungMinds Parents Helpline for free on: 0808 8025544.
Open Monday-Friday, 09:30 am - 4:00 pm.

Webchat is available between 09:30am and 4pm from Monday-Friday:
[Click Here.](#)



Not Fine in School

Parent and carer led organisation offering information and practical resources for families of children struggling with school.

You can access the Not Fine in School Website [here](#).



National Autistic Society

Online information and resources about education for children with autism and young people. This includes advice around the different types of provision, finding extra help at school, and issues around school anxiety.

They also have a network of local branches. These can provide things like parent courses and family support, social meet-ups and support groups for young people with autism.

www.autism.org.uk



Contact

Provides support, information and advice for families with children with disabilities or other conditions including ADHD. Also runs family workshops and activities.

Free online chat service available [here](#).

Opening times:

9:30am - 5pm, Monday - Friday

0808 808 3555

helpline@contact.org.uk

LEEDS LOCAL OFFER.



The Leeds Local Offer provides information for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families in a single place. It shows families what they can expect from a range of local agencies including education, health and social care. The Leeds Local Offer is about providing families with information to make informed choices about services they choose to use.

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[Mental Health Support](#)



[Policies](#)



[Preparing for Adulthood](#)



[Cluster Support](#)



[Cost of Living Support](#)



[Social Care](#)



[Family Support Groups](#)



[Health](#)



[Support by Disability](#)



[Education](#)



[SEND Information and
Support \(SENDIAS\)](#)



[Early Years](#)



[Sibling Support](#)

SUPPORT LINKS.

