

Your free termly magazine

SEND

SEND Magazine for the families of our academies



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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

Harmesh Singh – SENDCo

Elizabeth Henderson – Assistant SENDCo

Kimberley Cross - Assistant SENDCo

Sara Zaman – Bridge Manager

David Joyce - Link Governor for SEND



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

Karen Jessup – Leeds East Academy

Dan Evans – Leeds West Academy





Hello!

Introducing new members of our Inclusion Teams from across the Trust



Harmesh Singh

SENDCo – Leeds East Academy

I am delighted to join a school which I believe is highly inclusive, has amazing students and exceptional staff. Born in Leeds, I am genuinely excited to work with a truly remarkable community.

Having over 26 years of teaching experience, my passion has always been to promote high expectations and raise the standards of achievement, delivering equality of opportunity and inclusion to every child, in a happy, purposeful, caring environment, ensuring that no child is left behind. Indeed, some students require extra help, and an important part of my role is to make sure that the more help they need, the more help they get.

Out of school, I love football and have always been a Liverpool supporter, whilst I continue to support my childhood team through the ups and downs, I cannot forget my hometown club - Leeds United - for whom I do scout for on a weekend. So, I guess, 'Marching on Together' we will continue to work collaboratively to ensure the very best outcomes for the students are achieved.



Rachel Dodds

Assistant SENDCo – Leeds West Academy

Hello! My name is Rachel Dodds and I am one of the newly appointed Assistant SENDCos at Leeds West Academy. I have always had a passion for working with students who require additional care and support and have "worked my way up" from being a SEND Teaching Assistant in the Primary sector, to Student Support Worker and now Assistant SENDCo at LWA. I am currently undertaking a SENDCo NPQ with Leeds Trinity University, with the ultimate aim of becoming a fully-fledged SENDCo in the future.

On a more personal level, I am a mum to two teenage boys - one of whom is navigating his own journey as a high school student with SEND - and an absolutely bonkers, yet adorable, Beagle named Roxie. Having experience of SEND in both a personal and professional capacity proves hugely beneficial and enables a deeper level of understanding.



Molly Hopkins

Emotional Wellbeing Coordinator – Leeds West Academy

Hi, I'm Molly Hopkins, Emotional Well-being Coordinator at Leeds West Academy

I deliver SEMH-focused support and crisis interventions, drawing on my experience as a Student Support Officer and Head of Year. I'm passionate about helping students develop transferable skills to support their wellbeing and personal growth.



Lisa Arundale

The Link Manager – Leeds City Academy

I am Miss Arundale, the Link Manager. Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my two lively, gorgeous puppies, Willow and Luna, as well as my rabbit, Poppie. Most weekends, you'll find me on the East Coast, enjoying long walks along the beach. I have a daughter who loves to sing and perform on stage, and I couldn't be prouder of her passion for music and the performing arts.

I'm passionate about sports and love helping others, both in and out of school. I am looking forward to supporting students at Leeds City Academy within our Link provision, helping them to thrive.



Chinmayee Kelkar

Student Counsellor, Leeds City Academy

I am a Student Counsellor at Leeds City Academy, offering confidential one-to-one sessions to support students' emotional and psychological wellbeing. I hold a Master's in Person-Centred Psychotherapy and have worked with NHS clients, charities, and schools.

My approach is person-centred, enriched with creative methods such as art-based techniques. As a trained yoga teacher, I also use meditation and breathwork to help students develop self-awareness and emotional regulation.



Minnie Robberts

Wellbeing Practitioner – Leeds City Academy

Hi, I'm Minnie Robberts, the Wellbeing Practitioner at Leeds City Academy. I have a degree in Mental Health and Counselling and over 11 years' experience in the NHS and schools.

I run wellbeing sessions for students facing challenges such as anxiety, low self-esteem, stress, social phobia, anger, bereavement, and more. My goal is to provide a safe space to talk and help students develop coping strategies for school and beyond. Many sessions include therapeutic art, adapted to each child's needs. I'm also available for ad-hoc check-ins and happy to support any student who needs it.

**Now you know us,
come and say...**

Hello!

**We are always available to give
support and advice.**



The Leeds Fun Activities and Short Breaks Annual Catalog can be found here: [Short Breaks catalogue 2024 24 V2.docx \(live.com\)](#)

This directory lists in detail fun activities and short breaks currently available to children and young people aged 0-18 in Leeds. The directory is accompanied by a guide, which explains more about the different LCC Commissioned Fun Activities and Short Breaks available and how to access them.

WHAT'S ON IN LEEDS.

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

Bunny Fun at Abbey House Museum
Bunnies have taken over Abbey House Museum this Easter! There will be grocer bunnies weighing carrots, bunny barmaids pulling pints, and some famous faces like Peter Rabbit. There will be a bunny counting competition, their usual range of fun trails and scavenger hunts, plus a range of crafts in the Education Room.
Find Out More

4

Dance Action Zone Leeds (DAZL)
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

5

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

6

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

7

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

8

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

9

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

10

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

11

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

12

Dragon Quest: The Search for the Lost Eggs at Lotherton
Calling all adventure seekers! Take part in a brave quest across Lotherton this Easter to earn your stripes in the field of mythical beast exploration.
Find Out More

13

Leeds United Foundation
Inclusive Easter Camps from Leeds United Foundation – holiday camps for young people with learning or physical disabilities with a variety of fun, safe activities.
Find Out More

14

Medieval Easter at the Royal Armouries
It's going to be an action-packed Easter at the Royal Armouries with combat demonstrations and themed activities. Plus, you can explore their amazing national collection of arms and armour.
Find Out More

15

Miffy collage crafts at Leeds City Museum
Visit the museum every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the Easter school holidays for Miffy-themed crafts. You can design your own Miffy ears, make a Miffy finger puppet or create your own collaged Miffy scene.
Find Out More

SEND SUPPORT NETWORKS.

SEND parents meetings with SENDCo – Pupil Passport reviews
Wednesday 25th March 2026



Coffee Morning
May 2026 – Date TBC



CATCH Event
May 2026 – Date TBC

Pupil Passport Reviews
Week Commencing 8th June &
Week Commencing 15th June

Connect Review Meetings
Monday 20th April 2026



Bridge Coffee Morning
Tuesday 14th May 2026

Connect Review Meetings
Monday 1st June 2026

Bridge Coffee Morning
Wednesday 8th July 2026

Student Support Plan review days
Wednesday 1st April and Thursday 2nd April 2026



Student Support Plan review days
Monday 6th and Tuesday 7th July 2026

Inclusion intervention showcase
Tuesday 9th May 3.15pm



STUDENT CELEBRATION.



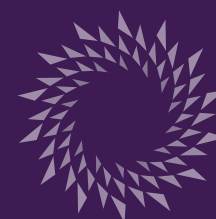
Khalil R

For always trying your best, even when tasks are tricky. You demonstrate resilience, and we are so proud of the progress you are making.



Rabia B

Rabia is a really dedicated and hard-working student. She always puts in the effort and wants to push herself, even when her health makes things more challenging. She's ambitious, positive, and genuinely trying to be the best version of herself.



Harry Q

Dedication and resilience in completing high quality work, demonstrating LEA core values of integrity and respect. Well done, Harry!



Luke B

Being a mentor to a vulnerable younger pupil in times of need. Luke struggled with the expectations of school life over the last few years; however, he has shone in the Inclusion area and helped the Inclusion team out in times of need. We are proud of the change you are making Luke, well done.



YOUR VOICE MATTERS

Thank you to all our families who provided feedback to our academies via the annual Accessibility Survey. Your voice really matters in helping us to shape and improve provision and opportunities for our students.

	You Said	We Did
Alder Tree Primary	Continue to ensure that bespoke support is in place and managed for groups of children.	Looked at provision mapping overviews and ensured that these are updated on pupil passports and shared with parents.
Leeds City Academy	Provide a quiet area at lunch and breaks for students who need a calm space	Students within the Link have access to a dedicated quiet area during lunch and break times, where they can engage in a range of calming and wellbeing-focused activities. This space is designed to offer a supportive environment for students who may need time away from the busy school setting. They can choose to colour in, complete mindfulness activities, build puzzles, read quietly, or play a variety of board games with peers or staff.
Leeds East Academy	Continue to develop provision to meet the needs of your child.	Developed provision for Leeds East Academy into a three-tier model to support a wider range of special educational needs. Support is provided through Thrive, Bridge and Connect.
Leeds West Academy	Nurture is becoming a little too busy, how can we make it quieter for independent learning and 1-1 conversations?	We have revamped the Inclusion Hub, ensuring that there are designated quiet spaces for supportive conversations and space for productive independent learning.

ACCESSIBILITY PLANS

**ALDER TREE PRIMARY**
BELIEVE - BELONG - BECOME

Accessibility Plan

**Leeds City Academy**

Accessibility Plan

**Leeds East Academy**

Accessibility Plan

**Leeds West Academy**

Accessibility Plan



SENSORY NEEDS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Many children with SEND experience the world differently through their senses. Noise, lights, touch, smells, or busy environments can sometimes feel overwhelming and may affect how a child feels and behaves.

What Is Sensory Overload?

Sensory overload occurs when a child receives more sensory information than they can comfortably manage. Children may be over-sensitive to certain sensations or seek extra sensory input to help them regulate.

Signs of Sensory Overload

Your child may:

- Cover their ears or eyes
- Become withdrawn or upset
- Appear restless or overactive
- Have emotional outbursts or shutdowns

These responses are a way of communicating distress, not poor behaviour.

Supporting Sensory Regulation at Home

- Create a calm space your child can use when needed
- Keep routines predictable and use visual supports
- Offer sensory tools such as fidgets or weighted items
- Allow regular movement and quiet breaks

Supporting Your Child in the Community

- Visit busy places at quieter times
- Prepare your child in advance for outings
- Take familiar comfort items with you
- Keep visits short and leave early if needed

Working Together

If you notice sensory needs affecting your child's wellbeing or daily life, sharing this information with school can be really helpful. Teachers and the SENDCo can work with you to ensure consistent strategies are used across home and school.



TOP TIPS FROM OUR FAMILIES: WHAT'S WORKED FOR US

Families from across our Trust have shared simple strategies that have helped support their children with SEND at home and at school. Every child is different, but we hope these ideas offer reassurance and inspiration.

01

"You know your child best. If certain strategies help at home (visual schedules, sensory breaks, routines), let the school know. Sometimes small things can make a big difference in the classroom."

02

"Before meetings with the school, write down what you want to talk about. It's easy to forget things in the moment, especially if you're feeling emotional."

03

"Your child's needs may change over time, and that's okay. Don't hesitate to ask for support to be reviewed if something isn't working anymore."

04

"Talking to other parents with SEND children helped us a lot. They often know about resources, services, or strategies we hadn't heard about."

05

"It's easy to focus on the challenges but remember to celebrate the progress your child makes. Sharing those successes with school helps keep things positive."

06

You are not alone. Sharing experiences and learning from one another helps build a strong, supportive SEND community across our Trust.

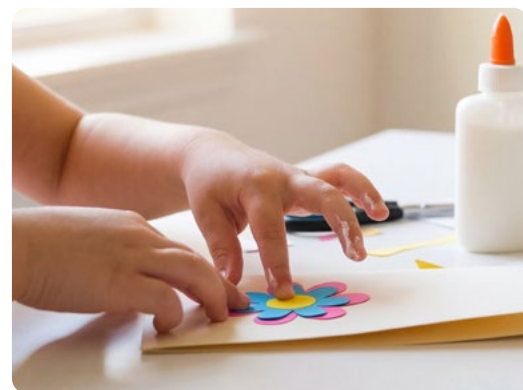


TOP SEND-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES FOR THE SPRING BREAK

The Spring break is a great time to enjoy fun, low-cost activities that support your child's social skills, regulation, and wellbeing. Here are some inclusive ideas suitable for children with SEND:

Nature Walks & Outdoor Exploration

- Visit local green spaces such as Roundhay Park, Temple Newsam, or Meanwood Valley Trail.
- Collect leaves, feathers, or stones and use them for creative crafts at home.
- Encourage noticing sights, sounds, and textures; helpful for sensory regulation.



Creative Arts & Crafts

- Make Easter cards, decorate eggs, or try simple painting and clay modelling.
- Use sensory-friendly materials like playdough, finger paints, or textured papers.
- Encourage small group projects with siblings to support turn-taking and cooperation.

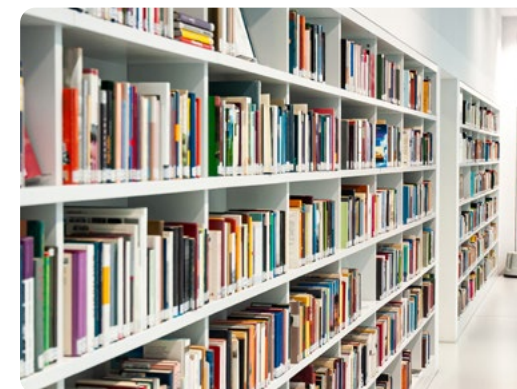


Cooking & Baking

- Simple recipes such as decorated biscuits or fruit kebabs.
- Involve your child in measuring, mixing, and decorating; supports fine motor skills and independence.

Quiet, Calm Activities

- Puzzles, board games, or reading together can help children relax and practice focus.
- Try sensory boxes filled with rice, beans, or sand for tactile play.



Community Activities

- Check local libraries, community centres, or leisure centres in Leeds for SEND-friendly events over Easter. You can also discover more in our 'What's On' section.
- Many offer inclusive craft sessions, story times, or soft play mornings.

Tips for a Positive Holiday

- Keep routines flexible but predictable where possible.
- Plan short activities with breaks in between to avoid overload.
- Celebrate achievements, however small, to build confidence.





SPRING SENSORY GARDEN JARS.

Create a mini garden in a jar!

This activity supports fine motor skills, sensory exploration, and creativity.

Materials Needed

- Clear jars or plastic containers
- Soil or potting mix
- Small plants, seedlings, or seeds (e.g., herbs, flowers)
- Small decorations: pebbles, buttons, shells, or toy insects
- Watering spray bottle
- Optional: colored sand or glitter

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Prepare the Jar

- Place a small layer of pebbles at the bottom for drainage.
- Add a layer of soil or potting mix on top.

2. Plant Your Garden

- Choose seeds or small plants.
- Carefully press them into the soil.

3. Decorate

- Add pebbles, shells, or small toys to make the jar visually appealing.
- Optional: sprinkle a little colored sand for extra fun.

4. Water Gently

- Use a spray bottle to lightly water the soil; too much can flood the plants.

5. Place in Sunlight

- Find a bright spot where the plants can grow.

6. Observe & Care

- Encourage your child to check their garden daily.
- Track growth, notice changes, and celebrate progress.

Learning & Sensory Benefits

- **Fine motor skills:** scooping soil, placing seeds, decorating
- **Sensory exploration:** feeling soil, textures of plants, colors
- **Emotional regulation:** calming, mindful activity
- **Responsibility & routine:** caring for a living plant

We would love to see your sensory gardens! If you and your child make one over the Spring break, please email a photo to your SENDCo so we can include it in our next magazine!



STAFF SEND CHAMPIONS.



Ava Burns

For consistently going above and beyond to support our pupils with the highest levels of need. You have built and nurtured strong, trusting relationships with the children you work closely with, and the positive impact of this can be seen throughout the school.



Sophia Fornwalt

Having high expectations for our SEND students means ensuring every learner receives the right level of challenge alongside the personalised support they need to thrive. Sophia consistently demonstrates this through her thoughtful planning and commitment to her students. She takes the time to adapt resources, shape activities to individual needs, and create a classroom environment where every child feels seen, supported, and capable of success. Her approach shows clearly that meeting a student's needs does not limit ambition. Sophia enables students to access learning in a way that builds confidence, encourages independence, and helps them reach their full potential.



Lyndsey Moon

Lyndsey consistently goes above and beyond in supporting students with SEND. Through the delivery of high-quality phonics lessons, they ensure that pupils build strong foundations in learning, while also demonstrating a deep commitment to meeting individual needs within the classroom. Her inclusive approach, positivity and unwavering dedication make a significant difference to students' progress, confidence, and overall experience in school.



All LWA Teaching Assistants

For providing high level support to our year 11 students within the mock examination series. You have all gone above and beyond to ensure that students feel supported in one of the most daunting times in school life.



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 Our Teaching Assistants

Alder Tree Primary

Teaching assistants have completed training with the educational psychologist around Executive Functioning Skills, this will support their work with pupils across the school.

Dennis Osei

Leeds City Academy

Dennis has started the Brick-by-Brick programme, which is a therapeutic, play-based intervention that uses LEGO building to develop social, emotional, and communication skills in children and young people. Working in small, collaborative teams with designated roles, students build social confidence, problem-solving skills, and positive relationships in a low-anxiety environment, supported by the LEGO Foundation.

Harmesh Singh and Surini Moonasinghe

Leeds East Academy

Both colleagues have recently completed their three day Safeguarding and Child Protection training, enhancing their understanding of the specific vulnerabilities that some students may face, increasing their confidence in identifying and responding to concerns, and ensuring they are fully up to date with statutory guidance. This enables Thrive to provide even more informed, responsive support and contribute to a strong safeguarding culture.

Annie Hilditch

Leeds West Academy

Annie has recently attended 'Leading SEMH practice' and has returned to school with many new ideas. Some of these have already been put in place to support our students in Inclusion.



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.

[View Directory](#)

 Short breaks and activities	 Education Health Care Plans	 Advocacy
 Financial	 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.

