

# Turning it around - going from failing pupils on the autism spectrum to 'outstanding progress': case study of a special



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# Structure

1. Introduction to the School and the Project
2. Our approach to autism and school improvement
3. Success criteria – what has changed for pupils?





# 2014

- Change of head teacher

- Inspection highlighted weaknesses:

some pupils *“with autism spectrum disorders feel anxious during the day as **their needs are not being well met**”*

*“For some pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder, **staff do not address barriers or inhibitors to learning** and therefore focus on resulting behaviours.”*

The school needed to *“**Identify learning needs accurately and implement appropriate strategies** to overcome barriers to learning, especially for children and young people with autism spectrum disorders.”*



# 2015

*“Children and young people **now have much better learning experiences** as a result of the many improvements introduced by the headteacher and staff.”*

*“Those with autism spectrum disorders **feel less anxious** as a result of the increased expertise of staff and more appropriate programmes of learning.”*

*“**Staff benefited** from very effective external training and consultancy on autism.”*

**“outstanding progress”**



# The project

Focus: increasing professional skills and confidence (rather than wholesale adoption of pre-set programmes or approaches)

Project structure:

- 3 full days bespoke autism training for all staff (and external partners)
- 1 ½ days parent/carer training
- 3 days of direct classroom observation and consultancy
- Development of support plans for individual pupils
- Strategic consultancy on policies and change management



# Key attributes of the change<sup>7</sup> of 14 management approach:

**Collaborative  
Professional  
development  
culture**

**Autism within  
wider school  
improvement**

**Involving other  
schools and  
the community  
beyond school**

**Practical focus**

**Not just one off  
training**

*See our paper on  
Network Autism  
for more details*



# ***Outcome 1: Earlier and more appropriate interventions***

## ***Reduction of physical restraints***

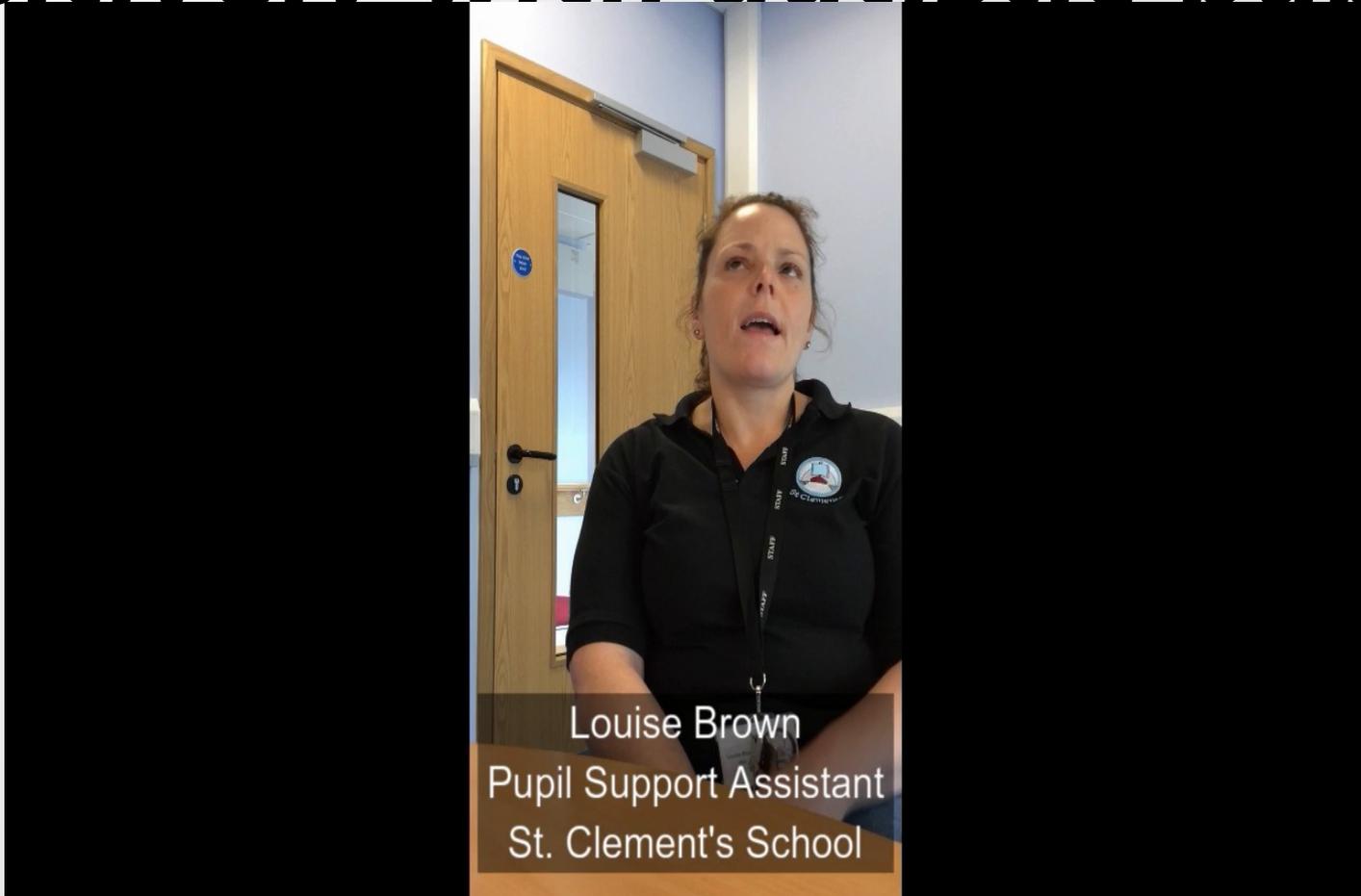
|                |          |
|----------------|----------|
| <b>2012/13</b> | <b>7</b> |
| <b>2013/14</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>2014/15</b> | <b>0</b> |
| <b>2015/16</b> | <b>1</b> |

# **Outcome 2: Improved staff knowledge of barriers to learning for autistic pupils** 9 of 14



- Using visual prompts (even with a verbal child) to support understanding and focus on task
- Taking time out for sensory breaks improved rather than detracted from curriculum delivery

# ***Outcome 3: Improved staff confidence in working positively with autistic pupils***



Louise Brown  
Pupil Support Assistant  
St. Clement's School



# Outcome 4: Pupils achieving their potential

2014

- 3 students (all leavers)
- 0 entries SCQF level 3
- 0 entries SCQF level 2
- 3 entries SCQF level 1

2015

- 9 students (inc. 1 leaver)
- 4 entries SCQF level 3
- 35 entries SCQF level 2
- 22 entries SCQF level 1

2016

- 12 students (inc. 4 leavers)
- 3 entries SCQF level 3
- 70 entries SCQF level 2
- 178 entries SCQF level 1



# ***Further outcomes:***

- ***whole school change towards a positive, more inclusive culture***
- ***improving outcomes for pupils (within and beyond school) - measured through parent feedback and teacher assessment***
- ***dissemination of knowledge and positive, inclusive culture to partner schools and wider community***



# Phase 3:



MAKE COMMUNICATION



# We're happy to answer questions



## Thanks

We wish to thank the Scottish Government (Scottish Strategy for Autism) for grant funding phases 2 & 3 of the project and all the staff, parents and pupils who continue to be involved in transforming St. Clement's into an Autism Centre of Excellence for the local area.