

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



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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^{7 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***

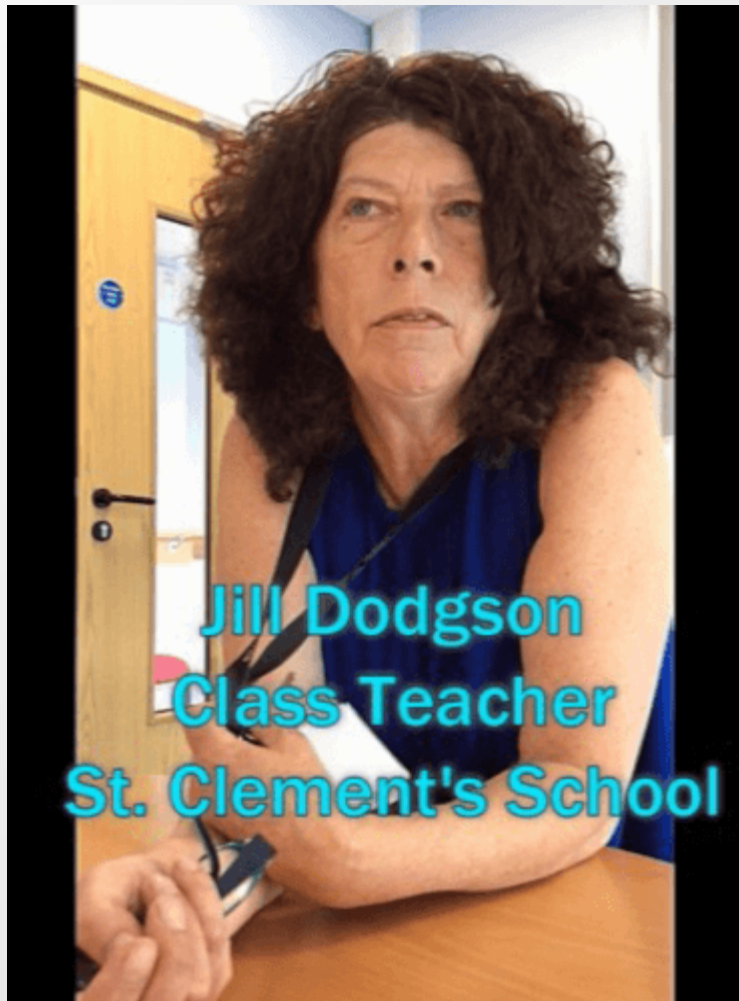


Outcome 1: Earlier and more appropriate interventions

Reduction of physical restraints

2012/13	7
2013/14	2
2014/15	0
2015/16	1

Outcome 2: Improved staff knowledge of barriers to learning for autistic pupils



- 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.