



Carol Brown
Independent Special Education Advisor

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Background and experience:

I began my career in education as a special support assistant in a non-maintained special school in Newcastle in 2001. During this time, I gained a depth of knowledge working with children and young people between the ages of 3 and 19 with a range of complex needs including combinations of sensory loss (hearing and visual impairment), communication difficulties, ASD, ADHD, Acquired Brain Injury, cerebral palsy, profound physical, learning and health needs, social, emotional, and mental health needs and some young people with syndromes or conditions which require specific approaches to education, particularly including Conductive Education for which the school was well known.

The knowledge and experience I gained working with these children and young people has been invaluable in developing a greater understanding of how to support them to reach their full potential in a suitable environment.

In 2005 I embarked on my Certificate in Education at Northumbria University and received a Diploma in Post Compulsory Education and Training on completion in 2007. During my training, I was given the opportunity to work as a class teacher, across the whole age range with a particular focus in the Post 16 department of the hearing-impaired unit, where I was responsible for a small group of learners. I gained a vast amount of experience during this time and eventually began to work as a full-time teacher in 2012 within the same unit. I then progressed to working with a larger cohort of students aged 14-19 years of age, with teaching and learning responsibility for work experience, transition, and curriculum where I remained until 2018. In 2018, I moved into a specialist college within the same organisation and became a Personal Tutor; I enjoyed working there and developing the curriculum within a Post 19 specialist provision until September 2022.

Whilst working in the education sector, I have developed extensive skills in communication and become a highly skilled user of British Sign Language (BSL) and Sign Supported English (SSE); I am qualified to Level 2, working with hearing impaired students as a Special Support Assistant and class teacher. I have many skills in maximising a Total Communication environment and I can create individualised resources which involve using Augmentative Alternative Communication aids (AAC), low-tech and high-tech communication systems such as picture symbols, In-Print3, Clicker, objects of reference / object cues and I am proficient in using IT software to create suitable worksheets and resources to suit the needs of the students.

I have been involved in working with a range of disabilities and gained extensive knowledge of how to support these students appropriately and I am confident in my abilities in understanding their needs and development to allow them to flourish in a safe and supported environment to achieve their full potential. I collaborated with Teachers, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists and Physiotherapists to form part of a multi-disciplinary team to support pupils and students to access the curriculum with a focus on integrated approaches.

As a class teacher, I was responsible for ensuring the students had access to a broad and differentiated curriculum ensuring that lesson planning was at an outstanding level. I am skilled at delivering high standard lessons in a variety of subjects across the curriculum. I have taught children across the whole primary and secondary age range but particularly specialised in working with students aged 14-19 at levels ranging from early development at P levels (now known as the Engagement Model) and Pre-Key stage Standard or Pre-National Curriculum levels, up to pre-GCSE levels such as Entry Level 1, 2, 3, and levels 1 and 2 in core subjects including English, maths, and vocational subjects.

I value developing excellent professional relationships with students, families, and colleagues, which is essential to create a conducive learning environment in which to learn and manage the classroom at an extremely high standard. I have high expectations, and I am an excellent role model, which supports students to develop their own confidence and desire to learn. I am skilled in assessing educational needs as well as social, emotional, and physical needs which I use to inform planning to ensure each student accesses the most appropriate programme or pathway.

I am confident in producing comprehensive student reports which provide detailed assessment of their needs, and which are used to support Education, Health and Care Plans in the Annual Review process. I participate in meetings with parents, Local Authorities, and external agencies in the review of students' needs, and work collaboratively as part of a multi-disciplinary team to ensure their needs are met.

I am skilled in positive behaviour support and understand the need for suitable approaches in helping students to recognise their own difficulties where appropriate, having been given the language or tools to let staff know they need support. I have been involved in developing positive behaviour plans alongside a student-centered team, detailing the most appropriate way of supporting a student with challenging behaviours to help a student to learn effectively and remain safe in their environment. These plans are used to ensure that the approach is consistent for staff involved with the student, as well as collaborating with parents to use these effectively in the home.

Within my teaching and learning responsibility for qualifications, work experience and transition, I supported students to gain qualifications at the appropriate level and have extensive experience in using examination boards such as AQA, OCR, Ascentis, ASDAN, Edexcel Functional skills in English and maths, BTEC vocational studies, Duke of Edinburgh Award and John Muir Award.

I have been involved in working collaboratively with students, parents, colleges, training providers and employers to develop pathways for students transitioning to their next step in their education. I have supported students on work or transition placements to ensure they have access to the most suitable opportunity so they can confidently move on with a clear outcome for their future and feel supported throughout the process. Equally, I have found that some young people can develop an alternative adult programme, using home or community-based learning opportunities and social care providers. My role is to ensure that the young person is helped, using preparation for adulthood guidance, to take the next step and that their working week remains purposeful and positive.

I am a qualified internal verifier for ASDAN and AQA accreditations and manage a variety of clients both working within a home education package and supporting access to this accreditation in collaboration with schools to develop an understanding of the standard of work necessary to meet the criteria to achieve the level of accreditation. I am confident in my abilities to support students in their studies to complete the appropriate assessments and examinations to achieve their full potential and support them to move on to their next stage in their education.

I provide training to the home education support/care staff, therapists, and families, to allow them to enable the young person to access the ASDAN or AQA accreditation and follow up regularly to ensure that standards are maintained. To date I have developed both programmes over several years to allow young people aged 14-25 to access a tailor-made home education programme which supports their learning and provides meaningful education and activities in the home environment and the local community. This allows the students to continue with their education and provides evidence towards their outcomes on their Education, Health and Care Plan with added value.

In my role as an independent educational advisor, I can provide independent educational advice for children and young adults who typically have either cerebral palsy, profound and multiple learning difficulties, Autism or acquired brain injury and/or sensory loss. With my knowledge and experience, I can assess each student's individual needs, consult with those who know the student well, evaluate their current provision and package and then offer supportive input to the school or college. By working collaboratively, the needs of each child/student are fully catered for, with open and honest dialogue from all those involved which ensure the best outcomes. I am a caring, friendly, and conscientious person who will strive to ensure the young person, and their family, feel supported and are actively involved in exploring options to make informed decisions, as well as working and communicating effectively with Case Managers, Solicitors and Deputies.

Since joining Education and Case Management Services Limited, I have been dedicated to the company's commitment to achieving the best outcomes for young people with acquired brain injury or cerebral palsy, who may require extensive, complex care and rehabilitation. Throughout my career in education, I have always centered the needs of children, young adults, and their families, and I will strive to continue this approach in my current role. I remain committed to providing a high-quality service and supporting individuals in their educational journey.

Professional Qualifications and Memberships:

- Certificate in Education – Diploma in Post Compulsory Education and Training – commendation
- BSL level 1 (CACDP)
- BSL level 2 (CACDP)
- Society for Education and Training – formerly Institute for Learning – Associate Member
- Qualified internal verifier of ASDAN accreditation and AQA Unit Awards