



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.

The knowledge and experience I gained working with these children and young people have 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. I was given the opportunity, during my training, to work as a class teacher 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 a 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 and enjoyed working there 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 and Sign Supported English (BSL/ Sign Supported English (SSE)); I am qualified to Level 2, working with hearing impaired students as a Special Support Assistant. 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 at a higher level.

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 worked alongside 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 specialised in working with students ages 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 a very 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 assessment of 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 then 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 working collaboratively 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 am a qualified internal verifier for these examinations and understand the standard of work necessary to meet the criteria to achieve the level of qualification. 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 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 student 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, perhaps 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.

In my role as an independent educational advisor, I can provide independent educational advice to children and young adults who typically have either cerebral palsy or an acquired brain injury and/or sensory loss. With my knowledge and experience, I can assess each student's individual needs, liaise 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 ultimately 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.

I have only recently joined Education and Case Management Services Limited, but I believe that the company strives not to achieve the best for those young people with acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy and spinal injury who may need extensive, complex care and rehabilitation. I have always had children and young adults, along with their families at the centre of my career in education and will strive to continue this within this new role and hopefully will be able to provide high quality service.

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.