



Percy Hedley
FOUNDATION

Annual Prospectus

Northern Counties School



Registered Charity No: 515943

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Introduction

Northern Counties School is part of the Percy Hedley Foundation. The Foundation provides comprehensive services for children and adults with complex needs.

Its reputation for providing high-quality services has created a very special organisation in the Northeast of England. The Foundation provides two schools for children aged 3-19 years, Post-19 education in a specialist college, residential provision, and therapy services. Adult services include daycare provision and many residential and living options.

The Department for Education approves Northern Counties School to provide an all-through school for children who have a hearing impairment or visual impairment, those with profound and multiple learning disabilities and autism, all of whom require education, therapy and care delivered through a trans-disciplinary approach.

The school is located on two acres of grounds in Jesmond, Newcastle, within a 15-minute walk of Newcastle city centre. Northern Counties School is a non-maintained special school with an independent board of governors that the Board of Trustees of the Percy Hedley Foundation monitors.

Most children considered suitable for admission are referred through their Local Authority, which accepts responsibility for fees. Parents of prospective pupils are welcome to visit at any time, and we will be happy to answer questions and give advice if this is requested. All children considered for admission or assessment placements will have education health care plans or be in the process of assessment for an EHCP.



There are opportunities to progress through all aspects of the Foundation. We will provide the best quality and care to all of our students and residents, so they get the best experience out of learning and developing.

Our Philosophy

At Northern Counties school, we believe that:

- All children and young people have the right to an education appropriately directed and managed to allow the fullest development of their personal, intellectual, physical, communication and social and emotional skills.
- All children and young people have the right to an education which provides equality of opportunity, recognises and respects individual needs, allows maximum access to a broad and balanced curriculum and ensures preparation for adult life.
- All children should be given the best opportunity to fully develop their potential and prepare for successful adult life through placement within a highly specialist communication environment.

Our Aims

The aims of the school are:

- To recognise and respect each child as an individual and to provide an individualised programme to suit their needs.
- To enable every child to achieve their full potential through specialist education, therapy and care services, encouragement and high expectations.
- To ensure that each child is prepared and equipped to move successfully from each stage of education and to support transition to other services at the appropriate times.
- To help every child feel safe and develop self-confidence, respect, consideration for others and independence to be a positive and fulfilled member of society.

School Services

The school provides a holistic, connected curriculum across all school populations, pathways, and departments with adaptations to enable full access for all learners.

The school offers a highly differentiated curriculum for each population with a high level of support for all children.

The curriculum provides many opportunities for children to develop their academic, practical, and creative abilities within a caring, supportive environment sensitive to individual needs and personal growth. Learners follow an engagement, pre-formal, informal, semi-formal or formal pathway. There is movement within and across pathways, and no learner's potential is capped by the pathway they follow.

All subjects are delivered, and we consider national guidance to plan our programmes and meet the needs of each child. All children, particularly those with complex special educational needs, usually associated with early learning, are adapted to enable children to progress and demonstrate achievement.

This involves significant adaptation as appropriate to age, stage of development and individual needs.

Within the school, early learning goals and all subjects of the National Curriculum are provided through means appropriate to each child's needs. All children and young people are taught in class groups, which are generally organised according to their needs and age. However, where necessary, we alter groups according to ability and the teaching requirements of individuals. Specialist rooms and environments are available for some lessons: Computing, two school Libraries, Science, P.E. Design Technology, Sensory Integration, and a dedicated Forest School area.



Keller Department Deaf

Education



The children in this population are taught in small class groups of no more than eight, and several support workers will be attached to the group. Classes are taught or overseen by a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf, and staffing within the class comprises a range of hearing and deaf adults. These opportunities provide our learners with positive role models and support our high expectations for future opportunities in adulthood. Lessons are delivered in a Total Communication approach using British Sign Language (BSL), Signed Supported English (SSE) and oral English. The communication method depends on the individual's communication, and we promote the development of sign bilingualism across all learners, including speaking and listening skills. Speech and language therapists provide individual and group input on various approaches and strategies, including social communication skills, English grammar development and phonological awareness.

Lessons are delivered based on National Curriculum guidance, and as children move into Key Stage 4 and Post 16, accreditation is planned to suit individual ability levels. Subjects offered include English, British Sign Language, mathematics, science, computing, RSE geography, history, RE, art, music, PE, swimming, design technology, and food technology.

In our Key Stage 4 and Post 16 group, external accreditation is offered, including GCSE, Entry entry-level qualifications, Unit Awards, Duke of Edinburgh's award, Signature BSL levels 1 and 2, BTEC Introductory courses and Ascentis qualifications at Levels 1 and 2 as appropriate to the student's needs.

Specialist occupational therapy and physiotherapy staff work in these groups to address individual needs and key curriculum areas. These include life skills to promote independence and individual mobility and gross motor programs such as rebound therapy and hydrotherapy.

Children's development and progress are carefully monitored and assessed by teaching and therapy staff with support from learning support workers. Progress in all curriculum areas is assessed through the use of iASEND, Key Stage procedures and other examinations, as appropriate. Therapists use various assessment tools to record progress in all child development aspects. The school can access an educational psychologist as part of the wider organisation, and the department works very closely with Northeast Deaf CAMHS services. Parents and professionals can evaluate a child's progress together regarding personal development and the context of specific standardised measures. They are informed of children's development and achievements through Annual Review procedures and regular contact with the school.



ASD Departments

The Hillcrest Centre and
The Armstrong Centre

Education 

We offer a specialist service for autistic children with additional learning and communication difficulties. Generally, learners require an individualised, highly structured, and integrated educational and therapeutic provision delivered within a Total Communication approach. Some staff in the department have an additional qualification (a master's degree in Autism and Education).

We recognise that all children with ASD experience three main areas of difficulty known as 'The Triad of Impairments,' including social communication, social interaction, and social imagination. How the Equals curriculum is adapted and how staff plan and teach our pupils has the triad at its centre. The therapy team uses the SCERTS framework to underpin planning and prioritise learning and developing Social Communication and Emotional regulation skills. These skills are essential to enable our pupils to access the curriculum and the wider world.

Our lively, engaging, and innovative curriculum is thematic and reviewed every three years, enabling us to adapt to pupil cohorts and consider pupil interests. Within each termly theme, we aim to cover all areas of the National Curriculum at a level appropriate to each pupil. Our aim with each topic is to bring together the whole school during each termly enrichment event. We provide a flexible teaching environment, with pupils following individual programmes based on our detailed knowledge of each child.

We use a variety of approaches such as Intensive Interaction, Forest/Beach School, Lego Therapy, Baking Therapy, Occupational Rehabilitation, How Does Your Engine Run and the SMILE program. Pupils may also have access to social communication groups, rebound therapy, sensory circuits, yoga, Nordoff Robbins Music therapy, residential visits, outdoor and adventurous activities in the local community, theatre trips and many more activities tailored to support individual learning needs and develop pupil interests. An emphasis on Preparation for Adulthood from the earliest ages, functional and independence skills, communication and our integrated approach to planning, delivery and assessment is at the heart of our curriculum.

Typically, children who are placed in our Hillcrest Centre require at least 1:1 support with high levels of integrated therapy. These pupils will need a structured programme and environment, with the flexibility to adapt their day depending on arousal levels. Armstrong Centre pupils require a low arousal environment and highly structured teaching but a lower staff-to-pupil ratio.

As they progress through school, pupils are offered a range of external accreditations, including BTECs, Entry Level Qualifications, Unit Awards, AAC City & Guilds, Duke of Edinburgh, and courses appropriate to each student's needs.



Stephenson Department

Department for learners with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)

Education



At Northern Counties School, we have a distinct population of children and young people who have combinations of very complex physical, sensory, learning and health needs – their needs are met in the Stephenson Department, where students follow a pre-formal curriculum.

These children may have:

- Severe/profound learning difficulties
- Sensory impairments affecting one or more senses
- Physical needs impacting on gross and fine motor skills
- Significant health and care needs requiring close supervision and specialist medical care

Our pupil-centred approach ensures full access to a pre-formal curriculum linked to the Engagement Model that is suitably differentiated to meet their individual needs. This service is staffed by specialist teachers, therapists, learning support assistants, and full-time, on-site school nursing support. Learners follow an individual timetable based on their needs and provisions identified in their EHCP (Education and Health Care Plan).

We have small teaching groups in classes of up to six. Each learner has at least 1:1 support to access the curriculum and all aspects of school life fully. Occasionally, a learner may need additional staffing to support their health needs. We offer integrated teaching and therapy – staff work together to create individual timetables and programmes to meet the needs of each learner. This is intended to be age-appropriate regarding topic content but developmentally matched to

the child's needs. Teachers and therapists work alongside families/ carers to create personalised learning goals linked to the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) targets.

The complex nature of our children's needs demands a high level of therapeutic input. Therefore, the curriculum is built on explicit therapy-based sessions, including motor programmes, rebound therapy, hydrotherapy, individual physiotherapy, and communication development sessions. The therapeutic approach is implicit in all sessions across the curriculum, with jointly planned sessions focusing on learning goals and EHCP targets. We utilise a variety of specialist rooms, including light stimulation, sensory room, rebound room, vestibular swing room, food technology room and quiet areas.

Pupils with PMLD develop new skills at varying rates and may make progress or rebuild lost skills in very small steps. For this cohort of young people, maintaining existing skills is equally important. Monitoring progress requires observation and interpretation of responses over time. Staff record student responses throughout the day in daily logs. This information is qualitative and includes the context of the learning, position of the pupil, facilitations, location, noise, specific information on how the learning was staged and the mood of the pupil. Learning goals are reviewed and assessed by collating this detailed and specific information. Please see the assessment page for more details on learning goals.



Therapy is provided to all children in school. The team work collaboratively with staff and families to maintain and improve achievements and wellbeing. The typical Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy, with access to Physiotherapy NHS services on referral.

We employ six speech and language therapists and seven occupational therapists. NHS physiotherapists work on-site, and all are part of our integrated team that works closely with teachers and special support assistants. We promote a trans-disciplinary approach to planning and assessment, and Individual Education Plans are written in close collaboration to ensure therapy and education targets are integrated throughout the day. Our therapists work directly in classrooms, often in joint teaching and therapy sessions, ensuring all team members understand the child’s needs and goals.

Therapists can also provide coaching in class, training, and bespoke learner-focused workshops.

Therapists work closely with the Positive Behaviour Support Team to ensure that PBS plans are detailed with the therapeutic strategies that best support children throughout the day. They promote a total communication and sensory needs-led environment. Ongoing, holistic needs assessment informs targeted interventions and facilitates generalisation and functional independence.

Positive Behaviour Support is core to all interventions across the school day to ensure we promote a culture of the learner, families, carers and staff well-being, student regulation, access to the curriculum and quality of life. We provide staff training on all aspects of PBS and encourage co-production of PBS plans with families and the learners.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting Procedures

Teaching staff and therapists carefully monitor and assess children’s progress and development. Class teams maintain individual records of progress and achievement. All team members add their views and advice about the children’s development through regular dialogue, meetings, and written reports. Teachers and therapists use various assessment tools to support the evaluation of pupil achievement at all levels of development. We use a range of standardised and non-standardised tools to identify small steps of progress and thus plan for the next learning steps.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Our numbers of nursery and reception-age students fluctuate yearly and between departments. Across the school, all early-year students follow the EYFS Framework and their progress towards the Early Learning Goals is documented.

Each student has their own EYFS assessment grid, and classroom staff update this half-termly based on their observations of students’ learning: narrative observations and Earwig Academic media record evidence, which is shared with families.

Learning Goals

Education 

The learning goals are used to assess learners' progress who need to be more engaged in subject-specific learning. This links closely to the Engagement Model, recognised as best practice for learners working on early developmental skills. All the Stephenson Department and some learners in other areas of school use the learning goals.

We gather detailed narrative data for our learners using written daily logs and photographic and video evidence through Earwig Academic. This qualitative information feeds into the annual review cycle and informs the Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCP). To tighten this cycle, we designed our ipsative assessment tool linked to the EHCP areas where teachers can set individual student learning goals. These goals are summarised on a one-page profile stored in the student's daily log file.

The learning goals cover five areas with two or three goals per area set:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Sensory and physical
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning covers those key skills we want all our learners to leave school with the ability to attract attention, show a preference, communicate feelings and be as independent as possible within their needs.

Learning goals will not cover a set period; some may run a month, some a year. The important part is that the targets are individual, aspirational, and frequently reviewed to ensure they remain appropriate. Teachers will complete a learning summary for the term each half term – this documents individual progress towards each of the five areas. Teachers then participate in a review with SLT/MLT to discuss learning goals, progress towards these and available evidence. Teachers are encouraged to reflect on the targets frequently and change them as needed – they do not need to wait for the review to make changes. This assessment model aims to empower teachers to follow their initiative without losing their accountability for teaching and learning.



IASEND tracks learning for learners accessing the semi-formal and informal curriculum; it is used for all learners in the Keller and Armstrong Departments and the pre-14 learners in the Hillcrest Department. We use the iASEND online tool as the assessment framework as it maps directly onto the National Curriculum and our curriculum offer. The assessment statements can be used as learning objectives, individually targeting learning opportunities at the next steps. In addition to capturing 'vertical progress' (new learning and skills), iASEND captures 'horizontal learning' (depth of learning and understanding).

We track learning for all students in:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Computing
- Personal and social development (PSD)

As part of the first assessment for iASEND, school staff will consider which strand a student is working within; A, S, E, N or D. Each level then contains a list of statements for each subject. For example S level English "I hold books the correct way up and turn pages".

Each strand correlates to a developmental stage:

- A – P levels 1-4
- S – P levels 5-8
- E – Key Stage 1
- N – Key Stage 2
- D – Key Stage 3

iASEND covers all levels of attainment from P1(i)e to Key Stage 3 learning objectives. The attainment of all pupils in school can be effectively measured and tracked using this assessment tool. Analysis can take place looking at various cohorts and pupil populations and effective benchmarking with other provisions is available. This information is used not only to show progress on an individual level but also collated to show progress across the school in key curricular areas. From this, any area needing a particular focus can be identified and intervention planned.

All statements are written in child friendly language, from the child's perspective. Teachers will then select statements to work on each term and facilitate learning towards these. How frequently statements are changed will depend on the student and their learning journey.

iASEND recognises that learning is not like a ladder. Due to their different needs, students will have individual strengths and areas for development. With iASEND, there is no expectation that students must complete certain statements before moving on to others. Students are able to work towards all statements at all times.

Students' progress towards statements is measured on a scale from shallow (new skill) through to functional (confident skill). This means we are able to measure the deepening of skills as well as any new skills.



Accreditation

Alongside the preparation for adulthood aims, students participate in appropriate accreditations. We offer a range of accreditations depending on what students can access. We always look to be aspirational for our students and frequently reflect on learning and whether accreditations remain appropriate or if they need increased challenge. This is the range of accreditation on offer:

Accreditation	Subject Area	Award
AQA GCSE	Follows student interests e.g. art	GCSE
AQA Unit Awards	Specific topics linked to curriculum and pupil interest	Pre-entry Level, Entry Level, Level 1 Students work towards individual units, many are mapped onto GCSE content making this accessible for our students in bitesize chunks.
Pearson	English and Maths Digital Skills	Entry Level (1,2,3) – style of assessment makes this option accessible to a wider range of learners.
Pearson	All – follow student interest	BTEC Entry Level and Level 1 Introductory
Duke of Edinburgh	Developing new skills, interests and talents.	Bronze, Silver or Gold Award
OPT Award – adapted Duke of Edinburgh for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties	Building relationships and a residential experience. Developing new skills, interests and talents.	OPT Award
British Sign Language	Conversational BSL	Level 1 Level 2
Arts Award	Art skills	Discover (non-regulated) Explore (Entry level 3)



Individual Education Plans

A detailed Individual Education Plan (IEP) is written based on the child’s priorities for development, as detailed in their Education Health Care Plan. Priorities for development form the basis of individual targets and the class-based planning within which progress can be monitored. IEP targets are reviewed throughout the term in team meetings and are updated each term. Where a child has made significant progress or needs a target to be broken down into smaller steps, the target is changed at that point in the term.

Teachers and therapists provide:

- Qualitative data through commentary on the IEP document
- Quantitative data through percentage progress achieved

Both are tracked at four assessment points per year, at the annual review and the end of each term.

Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCP)

By legislation, children's Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) are reviewed annually. An updated report incorporating notes from the annual review meeting is produced each year for every child. Parents are invited to submit a written report to form a part of the review process. Teachers and therapists complete annual reports and contribute views and comments regarding progress, strengths, and areas for further development. Additional advice is sought, as appropriate, from other professionals to form an overview of the child. The annual review meeting (to which parents and other professionals are invited) is arranged every year following the circulation of all reports and advice submitted by those involved with each child. All reports, an Individual Education Plan and notes from the annual review meeting combine to form each child's annual review report.

This will, therefore, usually include the following:

- Parents' comments on their child's development (the parents' views)
- The child's views recorded in the most appropriate format
- Annual review report that details progress against the child's EHCP outcomes.
- A copy of the child's Individual Education Plan (and transition plan from Year 9 onwards)
- A summary of the annual review meeting
- Recommendations about the child's needs and future provision

The annual report is circulated as part of our annual review process to parents, the local authority supporting the child at the school and other involved professionals.

School Facilities and Resources

Environment and facilities

The school is well equipped to meet the needs of its pupils about their special educational needs. All classrooms are designed to suit the group's needs, for example, low stimulus rooms for the ASD population or access to specialist rooms such as the sensory room or light stimulation room. Other onsite facilities include swimming and hydrotherapy pools, outdoor and self-regulation play areas, a food technology room, a sensory integration room, a Forest School, an Innowalk room, a sports hall, and a family room.

Visual and auditory fire alarms are situated throughout the school. Additional attention is paid to meeting the needs of individuals with a sensory or physical disability and removing barriers which may impede their access to the services and facilities of the school. All classrooms can be accessed by lifts where required.

Information Technology Facilities

The school has an IT network, and computers are used throughout the school with appropriate means of access and communication aids. Classes are linked through the IT network, which incorporates internet access. Interactive whiteboards and tablets are being used in all classrooms. There is also a computing room facility for group teaching within our Hillcrest library area.


Catering and Domestic Facilities

The school's catering facility provides good quality healthy meals for children and staff, including food suitable for particular dietary requirements. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award and regularly reviews menus and the individual dietary needs of the pupils. There is an on-site laundry to provide a service to any child who may require it.

Minibuses

The school has access to five minibuses with special equipment to provide community access for all children and staff.

School Facilities and Resources

Additional Information 

Nursing

The school has paediatric nursing on site during term time. They provide continuity of health care for all children at the school and offer information, advice, and support for parents.

The nursing team has a great deal of specialised knowledge in paediatrics: we can care for a wide range of complex medical conditions and conduct a range of specialist procedures described within pupils' individual care plans. Parents are welcome to discuss their child's needs at any time before placement and once admitted to the school.

The school has regular input from Children and Young People Services (CYPS), LD CAMHS and Deaf CAMHS specialist services to support the emotional well-being of pupils.

Several paediatric consultants have close links with the school and arrange regular clinics in the medical centre. In addition, Ear, Nose and Throat surgeons based at

regional hospitals and the Northeast Regional Cochlear Implant team visit children as required to ensure an optimum level of audiological support with minimal disruption to school attendance.

Parents are always informed of forthcoming medical appointments and are supported to attend with their child. Appointments at local hospitals can be attended with staff support if parents would like this.

Parents and Carers

Additional Information 

Parents are encouraged to be involved in the life and work of the school and are always welcome. Members of staff value visits to the classroom, and contact can always be made to keep in touch if there are concerns about individual children, the curriculum (e.g. religious education, assemblies, sex education), school events or any other specific or general matters.

We have a family room for visitors; we also run a signing group for families, which is very well attended. It is always possible to come in and talk with teachers, therapists, senior staff, or the Head Teacher. To maintain security arrangements for the children all parents and visitors must report to reception on arrival. Home visits can usually be arranged if parents feel these might be helpful. School staff use Earwig Academic Timelines and the Marvellous Me app to highlight progress and achievements during the school day.

Parents are encouraged to make contact immediately if ever there are any concerns. The Headteacher can give advice should any matters cause serious concern or if a parent wishes to make a formal complaint to the board of governors. Copies of the school complaints procedure are available on request. Phone calls can be made to the Headteacher or other staff members as appropriate. A message can be left if a particular staff member is unavailable, and the call will be returned as soon as possible.

Updated information about the school is given each summer in the annual report, and copies of this are sent out to all parents. Regular newsletters are circulated to parents and friends of the school. These give details of future events, activities and general school matters and are also available on the school website. There is also a headteachers vlog added monthly.

The school keeps copies of the National Curriculum or curriculum documentation, policy documents, Equals schemes of work and other educational information that will interest parents. This includes, for example, copies of inspection reports, details of provision for children's special educational needs, sex education, religious education, and other curriculum subjects. Further information can be obtained by contacting the Head of School.

The daytime phone number between 08:30 and 16:30 is 0191 281 5821.

All calls will be answered initially by the school telephonist/receptionist. In the evenings, this number is connected to an answering machine to allow messages to be left, if necessary.



Absence

Additional Information 

Children must attend school as much as possible. If a child is absent through illness parents should phone the school switchboard to inform the class teacher and, if necessary, the school nurse. These absences are authorised.

Holidays in school time are not authorised. You can request that the Headteacher consider authorisation of a holiday in term time in exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised absence is recorded when parents fail to inform the school in writing or by phone that a child is away or unwell or if a request for absence has yet to be authorised. If there are concerns about a pupil's absence, we will work closely with the family to improve this.

The Friends of Northern Counties School

The Friends group was founded in February 2019 and includes families and friends of pupils from all parts of school. Their aims are to support each other, raise money for school projects and to share information and skills. Their Facebook page is a closed group – you can ask to join through the Percy Hedley Foundation website or just search 'Friends of Northern Counties School' on Facebook.



At the start of the Spring term 2023-24 school year, there were 78 pupils on the school roll.

Department	Number:
Primary (Foundation, Key Stages 1 and 2)	19
Secondary (Key Stages 3 and 4)	41
Post-16 (Key Stage 5)	18
Total	78

The School Day

The school day begins at 09:00 and continues until 15:30. There is a 15-minute break each morning. Lunch is at noon. Teaching time in the school is 25 hours per week. Afternoon sessions commence at 13:15. Teaching time in the school is 25 hours per week. Extended break times are planned to meet the personal care and mealtime management requirements of our children with complex needs.

Most children attend school daily, and transport arrangements are such that the children arrive at school at 09:00 each day and leave school at 15:30.

Religious Education

Parents can withdraw their children from all or part of the religious education lessons. Please let us know if you have any concerns about religious issues.

Extra Curricular Activities and Links with the Community

Wherever possible, out-of-school activities are organised to develop pupils’ social, communication and physical skills. Many provide additional learning opportunities in curricular areas such as art, drama, or PE. Residential trips and educational excursions take place periodically. The school encourages links with the community and other schools whenever possible. These can include visits, joint activities, and participation in local events.

Charges for School Activities

Additional special activities opportunities, such as residential trips, may be offered. Some non-compulsory activities may be offered, which require parents to contribute towards the cost, including special events or seasonal class outings.

School Council

This is an opportunity for all children to make their views known on any aspect of school life. Views are shared, suggestions are discussed, and decisions are made in conjunction with young people. The school council is an integral part of the school. It has previously raised money for an accessible roundabout, supported teacher recruitment and met with the catering staff to improve school dinners.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care within the school is a whole staff responsibility. All children have access to their class team of staff at all times. In addition, all children have access to senior staff in the school, the nursing staff and the Headteacher if there are any concerns they wish to discuss. Assemblies and class or individual discussions regularly refer to respect, responsibility, fairness, and care so that children are confident that their worries or complaints can be shared.

General School Information



School Code of Conduct

Expectations of children and standards of behaviour are monitored throughout the school by all staff members under the direction of the Headteacher and those in senior positions. Guidelines and policies vary according to children's age, stage, ability, and level of functioning. Expectations are presented differently according to children's special needs and are available in a written format for parents.

According to their abilities and levels of development, all children are encouraged to be responsible, tolerant, and supportive of others. Our staff team work together to facilitate the growth of independence, mature attitudes, and self-discipline in all the children. The school always promotes trust, honesty, respect, and consideration for others.

Misbehaviour or unacceptable interaction with peers or staff members is handled through counselling and discussion. Parents are always informed of serious behavioural problems and encouraged to be involved where disciplinary issues are concerned. We seek the support of social care and health colleagues as appropriate.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

Personal, Social, and Health Education (PSHE), including relationships and sex education (RSE), is an integral part of our approach to educating pupils in preparation for taking their place in society with as much independence as

possible. Because of the disabilities of our children, their level of maturity very often does not correspond with their chronological age, and we take great care to provide an individualised approach when dealing with sensitive subjects to ensure that we match the pupil's level of understanding and stage of emotional and physical maturity.

All school staff working directly with children respond sensitively and appropriately to questions about sex and relationships, taking into account the ability and needs of the pupil asking the questions. Parents should inform the class team or the designated safeguarding lead, Simon Adams, if any concerns are felt about the content or handling of questions. Contact will also be made with parents where appropriate to ensure they are kept informed and to ensure continuity of approach.

Parents are informed of any specific sex and relationship discussions which will be taking place and have the right to withdraw their child from sex education lessons. However, we hope that by working within the guidelines from the DfE and consulting, involving, and sharing additional information, parents will feel confident about our approaches and be happy to support our work in helping our pupils through their physical, emotional, and moral development.

General School Information



Physical Education

The importance of healthy living, exercise and activity is reflected throughout the curriculum. Physical education, which incorporates games, swimming/hydrotherapy, rebound therapy and other sporting/physical activities, is recognised to be an important part of each child's timetable and usually amounts to around two hours per week.

Football, cricket, Boccia, other team sports and swimming take place at school under the guidance of qualified staff. Other activities include running, trampolining, tennis, and badminton. Recreational facilities include a sports hall, swimming pool and playing fields. School teams participate in local, regional and, where possible, national sporting events, but much attention is also given to individual activities and physical development. Some children have swimming, hydrotherapy or rebound therapy in their physiotherapy programmes. A range of lunchtime clubs increases opportunities for sports and leisure activities.

School Uniform

School uniforms can be purchased via the school office, and children are encouraged to wear sweatshirts or hoodies for pupils in Post-16 with the school logo. Pupils should wear standard school trousers or skirts in grey or black, polo T-shirts and sweatshirts. However, some children may prefer to wear softer jogging pants to maintain comfort or help with dressing.

School Meals

The school provides mid-day meals and snacks for all pupils. The catering staff make provision for a wide range of dietary needs. School meals can be purchased online, whereby you can credit your child's account – please get in touch with the admin office for directions on this.

Charges for School Activities

The majority of activities arranged for children as a part of their education are funded by the school. Additional special activities opportunities, such as residential trips, may be offered, which the school generally subsidises. Some non-compulsory activities may be offered, which require parents to contribute towards the cost voluntarily, including special events or seasonal class outings.

School Staff Structure



The School Leadership Team (SLT)

The leadership team is responsible for directing and coordinating the overall management of the school's day-to-day running. This includes Martin Lonergan (Headteacher), Simon Adams (Deputy Head), Ros Martin (Assistant Head – Stephenson Dept, Assessment, Training), currently on maternity leave and cover provided by Helen Blakelock, Assistant Head and Rachel Jeffares Stephenson Lead, Abi Cowie (Assistant Head – Autism), Louise Allport (Assistant Headteacher Therapy, Carol Rawlinson teaching and learning coach and senior staff in key areas of the school.

There are over 20 full or part-time teachers within the school. Teachers are additionally qualified as teachers of the deaf PMLD or ASD or training through in-service courses to obtain these qualifications.

The school employs tutors with specialist roles in areas such as BSL, PE, Forest School, swimming and rebound therapy. The school employs over 110 special support workers, including some higher-level special support workers involved in working with all children and who give intensive support to meet the complex needs of our population. The health team comprises an experienced, qualified nurse and two healthcare assistants who provide nursing care throughout the school day.

The children's education is supported by a network of administrative, finance, catering, domestic and maintenance staff.

Therapy Staff

The school employs its own full-time occupational therapists and speech and language therapists. The NHS and staff provide physiotherapy services based on site. All therapy staff are active members of our multi-disciplinary teams. All therapy staff have regular meetings with the Headteacher and class teams to create a forum for discussion. Information sharing is a very important part of our ethos, and staff are actively involved in decision-making as we strive to improve standards and move forward our vision for the school. All therapists are HCPC registered and participate in regular supervision and CPD activities that ensure clinically evidenced best practice is adhered to throughout school. Some therapists have undertaken additional training to highly offer specialist services such as Dysphagia or Advanced Sensory Integration, and we have specialist resources available in school to offer rebound programmes, sensory integration therapy and the use of Innwalk technology.

Admission to the School



Percy Hedley Foundation provides a comprehensive assessment programme. Parents, schools, or local authorities can make referrals, and initial discussion will ascertain whether an assessment will be offered. Our assessment team will often visit the child in school or at home. If offered, an assessment is usually undertaken in school over a two to four-day period and will be carried out by a team that may include:

- Specialist Teacher (eg. the Deaf, Autism, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties)
- Occupational Therapist
- Speech and Language Therapist
- Physiotherapist

Recommendations of the child's needs and whether they can be met within Northern Counties School would then be made. The school works within the context of the Children and Families Act and Code of Practice to support pupil/student and family preference regarding placement. However, Local Authorities are responsible for provision and placement.

School Governors



Co-opted Governors

Jeff Lough	Chair
Andrew McBride	
Anthony Olsen	Safeguarding governor

Parent Governors

Joe Kelley

Staff Governors

Hayley Ritchie
Callum Fox

Local Authority Representative (Newcastle City Council)

Vacancy

Arrangements to visit school



Informal visits to the school are welcome at any time. Arrangements can be made by direct contact with the Headteacher or through the Local Authority.

Enquiries should be directed to:

Lauren Stephenson
Administration Lead
Northern Counties School
Tankerville Terrace
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
NE2 3BB

Email:
ncs.enquiries@percyhedley.org.uk

Telephone and Minicom:
(0191) 281 5821

School Website:
percyhedley.org.uk



Percy Hedley
FOUNDATION

The Percy Hedley Foundation is registered
in England and Wales, company number
01855026, charity number 515943.

percyhedley.org.uk



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