



# **Specialist Inclusion Support Service Annual Report for the academic year 2021-22**

## **Communication and Learning Difficulties Team - including the Speech, Language and Communication Disorders Team**

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**Date:** July 2022

## Staffing

Role	Full-time equivalent	Number of staff	Vacancies
Team co-ordinator	1.0	1	Vacancy
Lead professional and SLCD Lead (outreach)	1.6	2	None
Specialist CLD teachers	2.7	4	Vacancy 0.6 fte
SLCD ARC teachers	3.0	3	None
SLCD ARC ISPs	3.0	3	Vacancy 1.0 fte
SLCD Outreach teachers	0.9	2	None
SLCD Outreach ISPs	1.6	2	Vacancy 0.8 fte
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.8fte</b>	<b>17</b>	

### Key points:

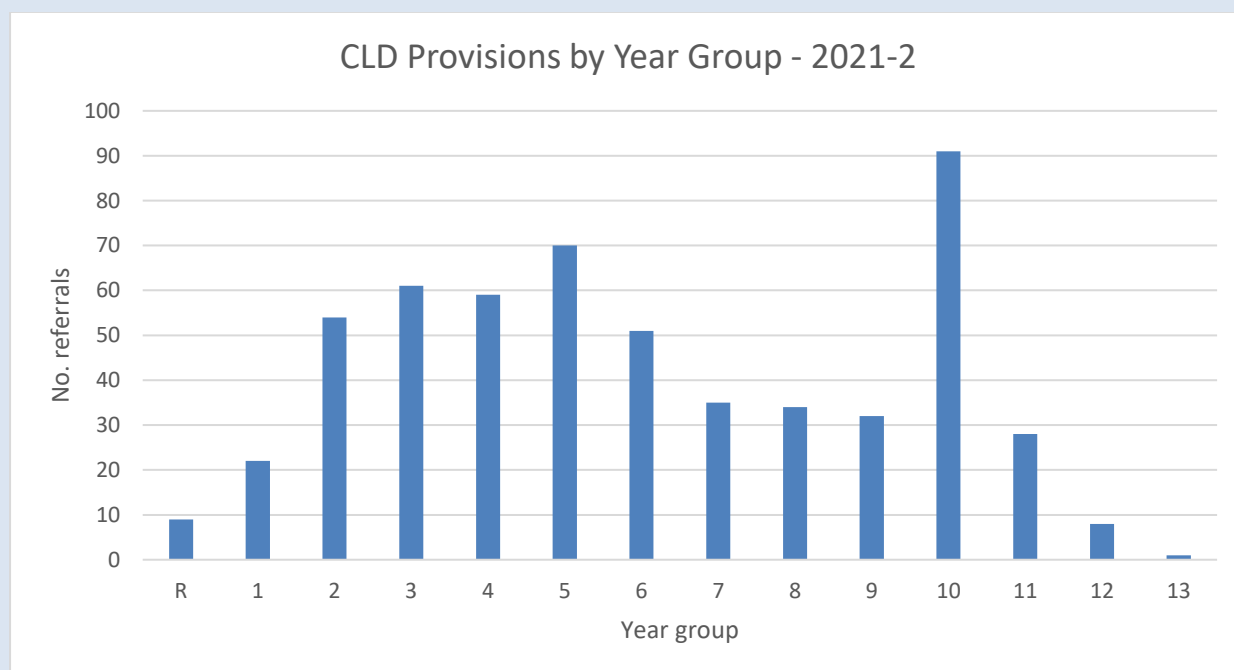
- At the start of 2023, a change was made to the CLD and SLCD team structures which saw them join to become a larger unit (see structure on page 6).
- In spring 2022, a Lead Professional was appointed to the wider CLD team: Samantha Foster. Sam had been working at Bishop Wilson SLCD ARC but due to her experience as a SENCO and her additional qualifications, she was given the promotion and is now working to lead the two SLCD ARCs and support the team coordinator. (See below for more details relating to CLD team restructuring.)
- Recruitment to two ISP positions (one for Valley ARC and the other for SLCD outreach work) has been challenging; the field was not strong for the outreach post and although we were able to offer the Valley ARC post, the candidate who accepted the job then turned it down. These positions are still vacant at present.
- After two academic years disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, whilst the CLD teaching team staffing has remained constant over the past 12 months, considerable periods of unforeseen absences have been the biggest challenge this year. Cover is always difficult to provide due to the lack of slack and flexibility in such a small team, however the majority of hours have been covered through part-time staff taking on additional work and the much-appreciated support, again, of Siobhan Farrelly from the SISS Autism team. Unfortunately three schools have not had their complete allocation, however, and therefore they will have a small number of hours refunded at the end of 2021-22.  
NB. Difficulties with covering absences has meant that the team has had to turn down requests made by schools and other LA teams for spot purchase, especially in the summer term.
- At the end of this academic year, the current CLD team coordinator and an experienced CLD specialist teacher (part-timer) will be leaving. Hours in the autumn term will be covered using existing and previous CLD team staff on supply. Recruitment is currently underway.

## Caseload Information

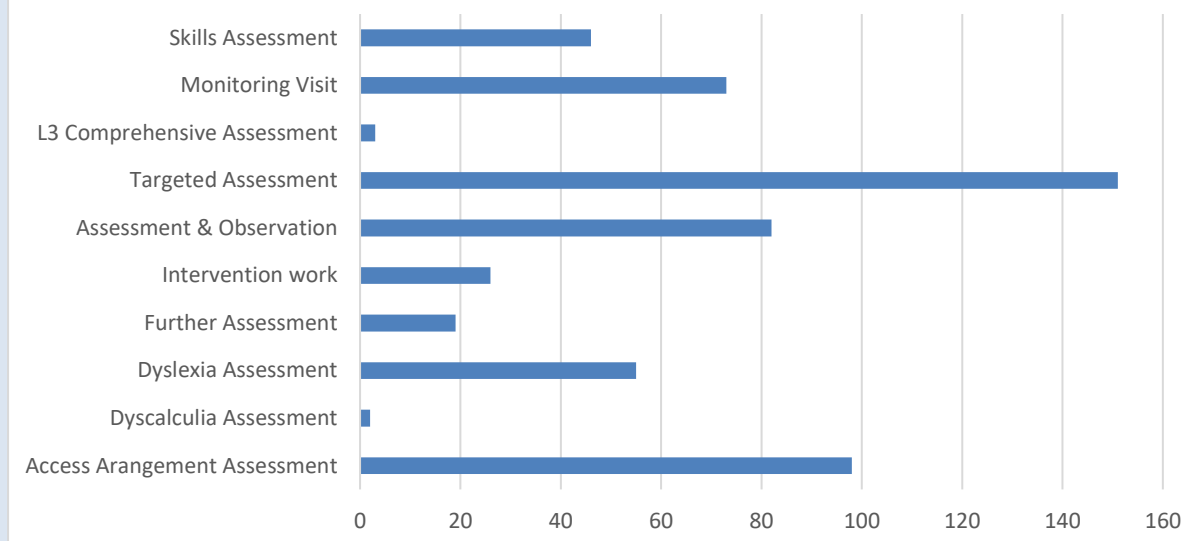
### Key points:

#### Traded work (CLD Team)

- 2021-22 saw an increase in CLD team up-front buyback of 98 hours. For 2022-23, the net gain is a further 352 hours.
- In 2021-22, 10 schools increased their hours; 5 reduced their hours.
- Four settings were either new to the CLD team, or returning after a period away.
- This year, the workflow process has recorded 555 provisions for the CLD team. The graphs overleaf show how these are divided into year group and type of provision.
- In terms of the boy v girl split, this year's figures are reflective of previous years, with approximately one third of CLD team work carried out with girls (35% – last year 36%) and two thirds (65% - last year 64%) with boys.
- Again, the majority of CLD support has been requested for years 2-6. And again, the relatively high volume of year 10 referrals was due to schools' need for examination access arrangements.
- Although last year saw increasing number of requests to observe and assess pupils in Reception and Year 1, this year the number of children seen in Reception has reduced a little.
- With the new dyslexia pathway now fully embedded, there has been an increase in requests for comprehensive SpLD assessments; this year it was up from 34 to 55.
- The number of KS4 and KS5 access arrangements assessments carried out has doubled since 2020-21. This appears to be because fewer schools currently have their qualified assessor in school to carry out the assessments.
- Other provisions were broadly similar in percentage to past years, with the targeted 'level 2' assessment proving to be the most request provision again.



## Analysis of CLD Assessment and Intervention Work - 2020-21



### Key points:

#### Non-traded work (SLCD Outreach Team)

Figures from September 2021-July 2022

Total Number of children on SLCD caseload	Number of children supported at a High Needs Level	Number of new referrals accepted.
255	76	100

- Changes have been made to the criteria for access to initial support from the SLCD team.
- The new approach to first contact includes a 'blended' approach; this has improved outcomes for SLCD children, professionals and families.
- A move to a central workflow system (using Synergy) has been completed so that the involvement of the SLCD team with a child can be tracked and data collated more easily.
- Schools are now able to request high needs support via the online SISS referral form, assuming that they can evidence that they have acted upon previous advice from the SLCD team.

### Key points:

#### Additionally Resourced Centres (ARCs) for children with Speech, Language and Communication Disorders

- In 2021-22 there have been 10 pupils on roll at Valley ARC and 8 at the Bishop Wilson (BW) provision. Both are under capacity for several reasons, with the recent pandemic playing its part in delays made to applications, inability to show parents around etc.
- The SLCD outreach team currently have a small number of children whom they believe would meet the criteria for an ARC place. Whilst the placement Panel is still functioning, in that

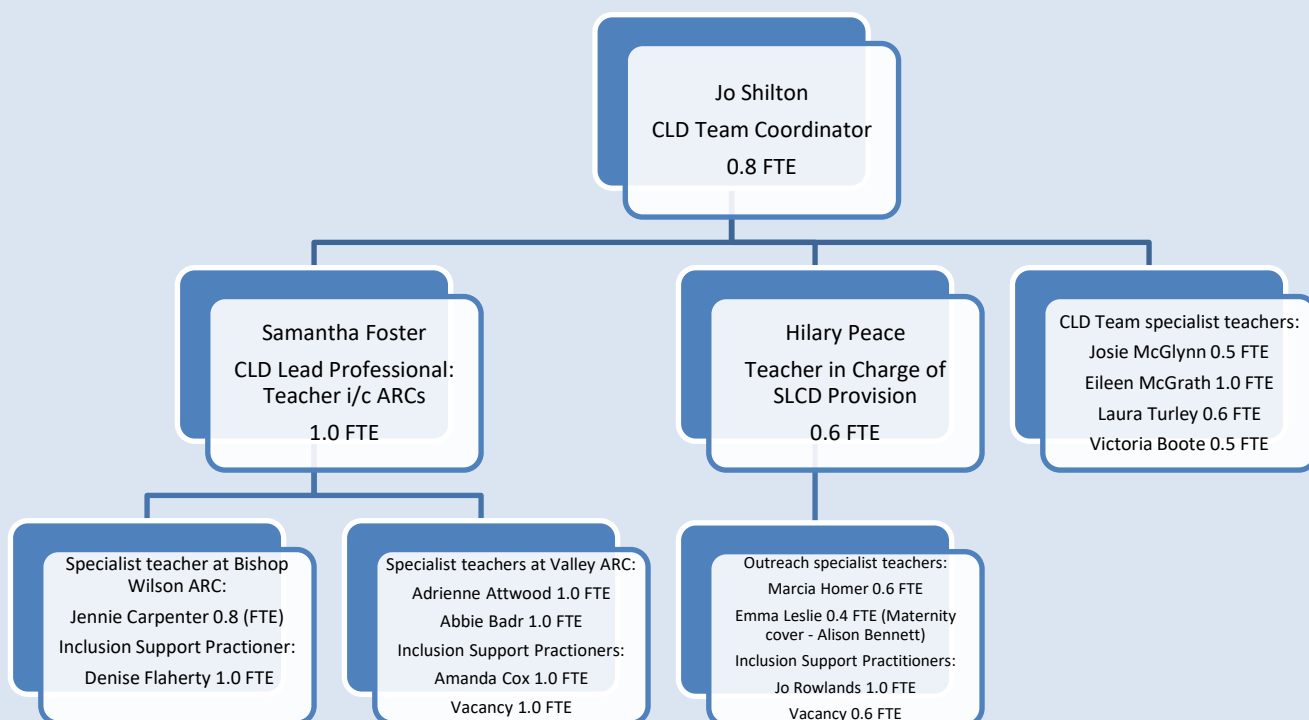
applications for new places are being considered when a referral is made, it has not been uncommon for families to turn down places at an ARC due to a number of factors.

- Three year 6s are about to leave Valley with one going on to a secondary ARC, another to a specialist provision in Solihull and another who is yet to be placed. This will leave just seven children in the provision for 2022-23.
- Two children at Valley ARC have been through the statutory assessment process and have secured Education, Health and Care Plans. Whilst they can access the current specialist provision without an EHCP, their needs are considered to be complex and once the ARC support ends after year 6, it has been considered that they will both require additional support over and above the resources ordinarily available to mainstream secondary settings.
- The progress and attainment of pupils in the ARC is tracked using a variety of tools, some of which allow very small steps of improvement to be measured. Generally speaking, the children are making commendable gains in all aspects of literacy and language and, in most cases, maths too. The ARC End of Year reports detail progress and attainment very clearly, however, some key data which are worthy of note for this report are:
  - At BW, great gains in the children's reading have been made: in the last the 10 months the cohort have improved their word level reading on average by 12 months; two pupils made over 2 years' progress. However, reading comprehension saw the biggest gains with the children making on average 21 months progress over the 10 months. Some of the children made between 2 and 5 years' progress in their reading comprehension.
  - Also at BW ARC, of the five children who achieved low or below average scores in Language Link in September 2021, all are now well within the average range
  - At Valley, all the children made progress in maths, writing, reading and speech and language skills and most made at least the expected levels of progress from their individual starting points.
  - One year 6 pupil from Valley achieved the expected level for reading in the KS2 SATs - this was a huge achievement for her.
  - Over a 10 month period, the children made on average 11 months' progress with their word reading and 9 months' progress with their comprehension skills. Some children made some big gains with over 2 years progress with their word reading and over 1 year and 6 months' progress with their comprehension skills.

## Key developments and achievements for 2021-22

- **Restructuring of CLD and SLCD teams**

To create a larger team, and to bring it more in line with other SISS teams, this year the CLD and SLCD teams have joined and are now under the leadership of the CLD team coordinator. The appointment of Sam Foster to Lead Professional in the spring term was also part of this restructure which is as follows:



- **Collaborative work on the Graduated Approach**

Like all of the SISS teams, the CLD and SLCD teams have worked with SENCOs, the Community Educational Psychology Team and other professionals (e.g. Speech and Language Therapy) to produce first drafts of the targeted and specialist provision which schools need to be considering when providing support for children with cognition and learning needs, and also speech, language and communication needs. The team have also contributed to the 'universal' aspect of the Graduated Approach workstream too. More work is to be done on this next term so it is completely ready to go on the LA Local Offer for access by SENCOs.

- **Focused Observation Tools**

Vicky Boote, with some input from the CLD team, has come up with a template for 'focused observation screening tools' which we envisage schools using with children in the EYFS or KS1, ahead of any formal assessment: as part of early investigations or the start of the 'graduated approach' to support. 2020-21 saw an increase in referrals for Reception children to the CLD team however many

of these were not wholly appropriate, with little having been done in settings prior to the request for specialist support. The first tool produced has been a 'Communication and Early Language' document which details what class teachers and SENCOs might look for/see in the classroom, what this might mean and what could be done to support that child. There is then space to make comments pertinent to the child and to then review impact of support and intervention put into place. The plan is to develop this further by creating a 'suite' of observation tools (e.g. to look at motor skills, sensory processing, attention and concentration etc.) that can go on the Graduated Approach page of the Local Offer page, for SENCOs to download and use.

- **Embedding the Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) pathway**

The work done in 2020-21 relating to referrals into the SLCD Outreach team has been embedded this year. Speech and Language Therapists are referring pupils in to the new fortnightly triage 'Panel', although regular reviews of this system has highlighted issues with the 'type' of pupil being referred. This is something that Hilary Peace has raised with the SALT team and thus it has improved. Other challenges have been regarding schools not requesting high needs support, despite the SLCD team knowing there is a need. The referral process has been demonstrated and highlighted to SENCOs again at the network meetings, and this is now picking up.

Regarding the training package that had been put together last year, as the Inclusion Strategy has developed, the commissioning of this for 2022-23 and beyond has been discussed. It is understood that the SLCN whole school training is likely to be part-commissioned by the LA with schools asked to contribute too.

- **ELKLAN 3-5 years Training: Communication Friendly Settings**

After much hard work on the part of the Hilary Peace (SLCD outreach coordinator), together with the Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) service and staff from the settings themselves, five Early Years settings gained accredited 'Communication Friendly Status'. Furthermore, five practitioners also gained a Level 4 Speech and Language Communication qualification.

- **ICAN Project**

A Maternity and Early Years Strategy was set up in Sept 2022 to ensure that the council improved outcomes for children under 5, reducing inequalities and ensuring that there is enough high quality early education and care for parents. The SISS Manager and the SLCD Outreach Teacher in Charge (Hilary Peace) worked alongside other Solihull Agencies, led by ICAN, to determine how Speech, Language and Communication services for children, families and professionals can be improved.

From the larger working group, various sub groups were set up. The SISS SLCD Teacher in Charge is now working in a 'Task and Finish' group which includes Solihull NHS Speech and Language Early Years Team to identify and create a Communication Pathway from 0-5yrs focussing on the Targeted and Specialist areas.

- **Continued development of dyslexia assessments**

The CLD team endeavour to keep up to date with ongoing changes to the guidance on SpLD assessments, usually made by SASC. This year, new tests have been bought (to satisfy requirements

for secondary assessments) and training undertaken to ensure that the reports meet the needs of the students being assessed. Vicky Boote has undertaken a Level 7 qualification to enable her to identify learners with dyslexia, which will be invaluable to the team moving forward. Next Year Eileen McGrath will begin this course too.

- **Live training reinstated**

Being able to deliver training live, either in settings or at Sans Souci, this year has been welcomed by all. The Language Link sessions are now back up and running, as well as other central courses. This year has seen an increase in schools requesting in-house training as well, possibly as a result of missed opportunities during the previous two academic years.

## Traded service: CLD Team

### Buyback

Number of schools purchasing CLD team support in for 2021/22 and for next academic year through an annual Service Level Agreement (SLA):

Year	Primary	Secondary	Independent	Total schools	Specialist Settings	Total
2020-21	26	7	1	34	2	36
2021-22	28	7	1	35	4	39
2022-23	25	9	1	35	4	39

### Key points:

- For September 2022, Yew Tree, Cranmore Infants, Alderbrook and St. Peter's Schools have both commissioned hours from the CLD team. In addition, the Virtual School have bought 270 hours.
- Three schools have ceased their CLD contracts for the new year: Valley Primary have decided to buy in Warwickshire; St George and St Teresa's RC Primary School have joined the local Catholic MAT and have been directed to use the company which others in the MAT currently use; and Forest Oak are no longer on the list as their commissioned work this year was for specific pupils who have now left their setting.
- Ten existing schools have increased their annual hours and four have reduced their buyback.
- The overall change to CLD team SLA hours for the new academic year is 352.
- Additionally, the team has covered 56 hours of spot-purchased assessment time (exactly the same as 2020-21) and completed a day of bespoke training for the South Birmingham SCITT course.



## Training

### Centrally based training

Course name	Delivered to:	Total number of participants trained	% graded course overall good or outstanding
New SENCO training	New SENCOs and those new to Solihull	7 (only 3 evaluations completed online)	100%
Dyslexia training	Teachers and Learning Support Staff	6 (only 2 evaluations completed online)	100%
BEAM 'Refresher' training	Teachers and Learning Support Staff	8 (5 evaluations completed online)	100%

#### Comments from delegates

*"I really enjoyed the session. We were all made to feel comfortable and it was good to be able to share thoughts, ideas and suggestions. Looking forward to delivering the course; it is such a valuable resource. Thank You."* (BEAM 'Refresher' training)

*"I liked how there were lots of links to quality first teaching and how the strategies were demonstrated that we can put into place for specific pupils in more inclusive ways."* (Dyslexia Training)

*"I found this more useful, factual and specific than the NASENCo course!"* (New SENCO Training)

Additionally to this formal training, Eileen McGrath and Jo Shilton from the CLD team held a free, informal online session on Ofsted and reading in early 2022. This was well-attended by SENCOs and literacy coordinators, with positive feedback received.

### Traded training (out of school's SLA hours)

Course name	Delivered to:	Total number of participants trained	% graded course overall good or outstanding
Access Arrangements: Training for Readers, Scribes and PAs	Summerfield – All staff	18	100%
Supporting Pupils with Language & Literacy Needs	Solihull Academy – Learning Support Staff	10	100%
Precision Teaching	Balsall Common	15	100%
BEAM 'Refresher' Training	Ruckleigh	6	100%
Dyslexia Training: Parts 1 & 2	Knowle Primary School	10	100%
Introduction to Dyslexia	St. Patrick's CE Academy	5	100%
Supporting Writing Skills	Woodlands Infant School	22	100%

#### Comments from delegates

*"Very informative. Ironed out all of the queries. New key information."* (Access Arrangements Training)

*"The word sort on cards is brilliant. Very helpful session."* (Supporting Pupils with Language & Literacy Needs)

*"Gave me lots of ideas to use in the classroom and 1-1 sessions."* (Supporting Pupils with Language & Literacy Needs)

*"Having a pack and having a practice at using the probe record was really useful. Thank you for a lovely presentation."* (Precision Teaching)

*"It was all useful, lots of extra information shared. Thank you."* (BEAM 'Refresher' Training)

*"The range of strategies for spelling to use in lesson and how to improve a child's memory was great. Thank you for bringing in the resources for us to look at - they were fab!"* (Dyslexia Training: Parts 1 & 2)

*"It offered lots of practical ideas that transfer to the classroom easily. Thank you."* (Supporting Writing Skills)

### Commissioned and bespoke training

Course name	Delivered to:	Total number of participants trained	% graded course overall good or outstanding
Supporting Pupils with SEND in the Classroom	SCITT Students – South Birmingham College	40 (only 7 evaluations recorded)	100%

#### Comments from delegates

*"Good signposting towards resources to use. Very knowledgeable."* (Supporting Pupils with SEND in the Classroom)

*"Useful teaching techniques and practices to apply, as well as the psychology behind some things."* (Supporting Pupils with SEND in the Classroom)

### Language Link – training and support (delivered by Marcia Homer)

During 2021-2022:

- 31 infant schools subscribed to Language Link
- 29 schools subscribed to Junior Language Link
- 5 schools subscribed to Speech Link

Data from Language Link 2021-2022:

Year Group	Children assessed with severe receptive language needs	Children assessed with moderate receptive language needs	Children assessed with mild receptive language needs	Children assessed at an expected level
Reception	11%	13%	5%	71%
Yr 1	13%	14%	6%	67%
Yr 2	19%	20%	7%	54%

- Three Language Link training sessions took place this year: 1 per term.
- A total of 17 professionals – mainly TA's – attended the training.
- 100% of attendees stated that their knowledge had increased.

The comments from the course were:

*"It was lovely to hear other people's practice and Marcia shared some great ideas to take back."*

*"I will be putting lots of these ideas into practice in the classroom and during the Language Link sessions."*

## Evaluation of 2021-22

### CLD Team key points:

- This academic year has in several ways been more challenging than the previous two for the CLD team. Unexpected absences have been difficult to cover, with such a small team and difficulties finding appropriately qualified teachers to assist on supply. For the first time in many years, three schools have had to have hours refunded at the end of the academic year for unfulfilled hours.
- Initially, we were able to cover spot purchase; however due to the need to try and cover absences, we were unable to accept any additional work after the Easter break. This was frustrating for some settings, but perhaps served as a reminder that many schools who have reduced the number of hours purchased 'up-front' may need to reconsider their SLAs in future.
- Feedback from the SISS end of year survey indicated that 100% of schools would rate the service they have received this year from the CLD team as either 'good' (21%) or 'very good' (79%). When asked "To what extent has the support you've received from the CLD Team supported your setting with the inclusion of children or young people with CLD?" responses suggested that 100% of schools rated our input as good or better. In terms of how the support the CLD team has offered has improved the outcome for pupils, 96% of respondents said outcomes were either 'good' or 'very good'. This feedback mirrors previous years which is very pleasing given the ongoing challenges in 2021-22. Comments from the SENCOs who completed the survey about the CLD said things like:
  - "Our two CLD teachers have been fantastic, with all of the assessments that have been completed, access arrangements testing and dyslexia assessments. The recommendations that they suggest are all manageable and realistic for a mainstream secondary classroom situation. They are also a wealth of knowledge, whenever I have a query and are very friendly and supportive."
  - They are so responsive via email when I have a question. The support and advice has been great."

And when asked what they like about the service, they said:

- "The advice and suggestions from assessments - these have provided ways forward. I've also appreciated being able to talk to our named teacher about collating evidence for future dyslexia assessments."
- Regular communication; Quality of reports; Advice and strategies.

### SLCD Outreach Team key points:

- The revised SLCD outreach pathway and criteria, adapted to reflect numbers of referrals in relation to the number of staffing, have been trialled. A fairer system for all children, schools and families is now in place.
- The new 'blended' approach to initial consultation by the outreach team has:
  - reduced waiting time for families and schools/settings to receive SLCD support once a referral or request is made, improving outcomes for the child through early intervention.
  - improved workforce knowledge by offering personal training from our specialist teachers to support practice within the classroom, strategies, resources relating to

speech, language, communication, learning and well-being in relation to the need identified in the most recent speech and language assessment document.

- reduced the waiting time for parents to gain the support of the specialist teacher.
- Outreach SLCD Inclusion Support Practitioners have focused on the upskilling of staff and parents, improving outcomes for the children and families.
- Email feedback from those involved with the SLCD team have been overwhelmingly positive:

**Comments from parents:**

- “Thank you for all your support and for giving me ideas to help my child.”
- “It really puts my mind at rest knowing that I can contact you if I need more help.”
- “It’s great to hear that you are helping the school are putting the strategies in place – thank you.”
- “It’s lovely to know that you really understand what my child needs.”

**Comments from professionals:**

- “Wow, I had never really realised that these difficulties would have such an impact!”
- “Thanks for giving me these ideas, I can use them with all my class!”
- “I’ve been giving these ideas out at a staff meeting as all the teachers will be able to put these ideas into their teaching – we have lots of children who will benefit from these.”
- “Thanks so much, I’ve gained a lot from the meeting.”

- The end of year SISS survey saw 21 schools who had had input from the SLCD outreach team contribute. Responses were equally split across ‘satisfactory’, ‘good’ and ‘very good’ in terms of overall satisfaction with the team. 95% of respondents did, however, say that they were at least satisfied with how the team had supported inclusion for those pupils with SLCD in their settings. In terms of outcomes, 90% said that the outcomes had been satisfactory or better.

Comments from schools included:

- “Our SLCD ISP has been very supportive working with named pupils, coming into school and target setting with staff who support these pupils. This has been very beneficial.”
- “The specialist support teacher was prompt and supportive and the report helpful.”

Although some settings have welcomed the new virtual consultation at the start of the process, survey comments also indicated that some SENCOs were not keen on this approach and also felt that there was too much of a delay getting ISP support. Others felt that they were put off referring to this team by the amount of paperwork required.

- Feedback from families, as reflective of the above comments, suggested that all of the five who contributed to the SISS survey felt they had received a ‘good’ or ‘very good’ service from the outreach team. One parent said that she had found the following helpful:
  - “Contact from the team, updating me on each step of the process. This continued when Ms R went into school to work with my son. He came home and told me he had, had fun - I am thrilled he was happy working with her. She then sent resources she had shared with school, for us to use at home and explained what was happening before and after she had been in.”

## SLCD ARC key points:

- The ARCs are beginning to settle in terms of staffing, after periods of change due to a maternity leave at Bishop Wilson and changes to the management structure of the CLD/SLCD teams. Action planning with the schools will continue to be a priority for the new Teacher in Charge during 2022-23 as well as working on continuity of approach and sharing the expertise of ARC staff with those in the mainstream settings.
- Post-COVID, there have been many challenges at Valley ARC including difficulties with liaising with parents and carers. This is improving and the outlook for September 2022 is now much more positive.
- Four parents of children in the ARCs completed the end of year SISS survey. Feedback suggested that all rated the service of the ARCs as 'good' or 'very good'. What they value most included:
  - "It is personalised and very individual. ARC staff care about my child and are 100% committed."
  - "How well my child is progressing; she is very happy at school. As a parent it is useful when I get resources to use at home and feedback as to how she is doing, as she won't often tell me herself."
  - "The ARC staff seem to know xxx well and are able to encourage him to do his best."
  - "The newsletter was a welcome addition for finding out what has been happening in ARC. It would be great if this could be repeated."
- In terms of improvements, the parents would like to see:
  - "Direct emails between teachers and parents with information of that day's targets etc."
  - "It would be nice to have some tangible evidence of praise (certificates celebrating small successes) as my child often doesn't remember what has gone well in school."
  - "An oversight of the differentiated curriculum would be useful plus key texts/resources/vocabulary that could be shared with home to enable us to reinforce and share the learning."
  - "Better integration within the school."

## Priorities for 2022-23

### Key points:

- Staffing: recruitment to vacant positions in the CLD team will be a priority for the autumn term. Given the buy-back for September 2022, the current part-time position of 0.5 fte will need to increase to 0.6 fte in order to meet the requirements of settings.
- Continuing Professional Development: there are several CLD team members of staff who are looking to gain qualifications relating to assessments, and to participate in training in order to widen their knowledge and skills.
- Given that slight changes are to be made relating to ARC teaching staff timetables (due to low numbers at Valley ARC) this will need evaluating and reviewing in the new academic year.

- The action plan for Valley ARC specifically (initiated in Spring 2022) will be developed by the team during the next academic year, with a focus on curriculum content/differentiation and communication with families. Liaison with the new SENCO at Valley will be key to this.
- Continued work with other stakeholders relating to the Inclusion Strategy, particularly in relation to rolling out the Speech, Language and Communication Needs training package prepared collaboratively with SALT in 2020-21.
- Further work on the ICAN project is planned.
- Further development relating to the 'Focused Observation Tools' for pupils in Early Years and Key Stage 1.
- Continued work on the Graduate Approach – all teams are involved in finishing off the work done for the website.