

# Specialist Teaching and Support Services (STaSS)

## Education and Learning

### Children's Services

## Newsletter — December 2025

STaSS "Our vision is to provide high quality support for all Bradford children and young people using a collaborative approach through transformational learning experiences so that they can flourish, make excellent holistic progress and successfully transition to responsible citizens".

## Social, Communication, Interaction and Learning (SCIL) Team



### Our vision

To offer a flexible and responsive service, supporting schools, settings and families to better understand and meet the needs of children and young people across Bradford to improve outcomes.

### Our values

**Recognising** i.e. supporting schools/settings/families to better identify and understand need

**Responding** i.e. the right support at the right time in the right place

**Resourcing** i.e. equipping schools/settings/families to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND



### First Steps to Phonics Toolkit



The Early Years Specialist Teachers have created a First Steps to Phonics Toolkit. This has now been delivered in several schools as part of the SCIL Team's SEND Specialist Support.

This is essential in order to support children to develop their early phonics skills through rhythm and rhyme. Building a rhythmic framework helps organise and structure language making it easier for children to understand and produce speech sounds. Rhythmic patterns improve auditory processing skills, attention and memory all of which are essential components of language development. Clapping, tapping or singing along to music provides valuable opportunities for motor skills development and social interactions.



## Resources

The First Steps to Phonics Toolkit includes resources to support:

1. HS First Steps to Phonics
2. Rhymes and Songs
3. Listening
4. Instruments and beats
5. Music and movement
6. Stories with rhythm, rhyme and sounds



## How to access

Speak to your Link Teacher if you would like support to implement this toolkit.

## Feedback from schools

One school stated:

*“Staff were really positive about the session and said that it was great to see how everything flowed together. They really liked all of the resources used and the use of song to welcome the children. They felt that the children responded really positively to the session and most importantly, they could all see how the session would help to enhance the children's learning and were keen to get started themselves.”*

## SEND Youth Voice Summit – February 2026



**On Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February around 40 young people and their teachers came to City Hall for the very first SEND Youth Voice Summit.**

**There were fun activities, movement breaks (and biscuits!) and the young people were invited to share their views on:**

**Their support plans**

**How they would like to be supported in school**

**Travel and transport**

**They also learned about SENIDIASS, the SEND Local Offer and the United Nations Rights of the Child.**

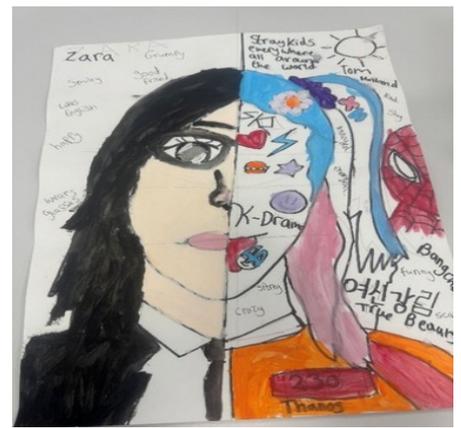
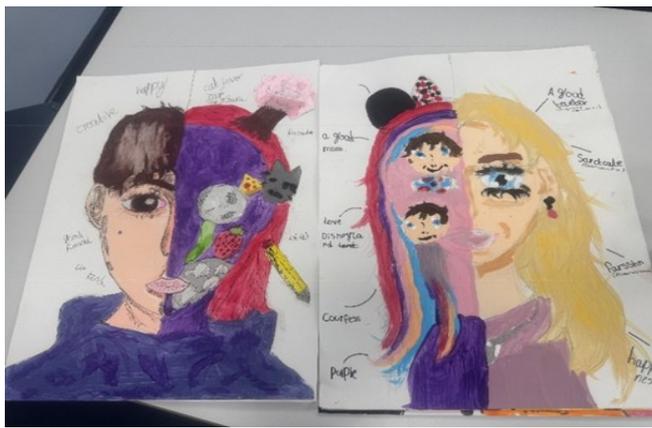
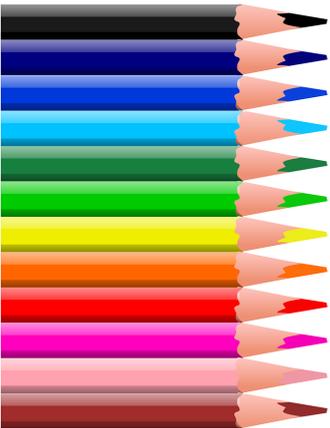
**Some feedback from the young people that attended ‘*it made me feel more confident talking to people I haven’t talked to before... my views should be the main part of my plan...*’**

# Local Authority Resource Provisions (LARP)

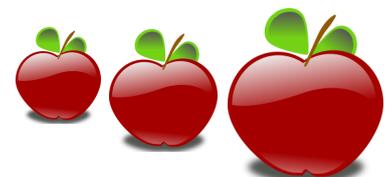
Our personalised learning this term has focused on our Inner vs our Outer. A self-portrait activity that shows the adults and others around them how the young person views themselves on both the inside and out. The first half of their self portrait is how the child views themselves in a mirror and how they believe they are perceived by the outside world. This includes wording which they believe others would use to describe them. The other half shows what the young person is like on the inside. The pictures show their interests, the things that are important to them as well as a mixture of feelings that are not always obvious to those around them. The wording used in this half are how the young person describes themselves. This has encouraged much discussion amongst our young people as they recognise that they have similar ways of presenting externally which are not always accurate to how they feel internally. Similarly, finding that they share common interests has had a positive impact of increasing communication between some of our more vulnerable learners.



## Bradford Academy RP

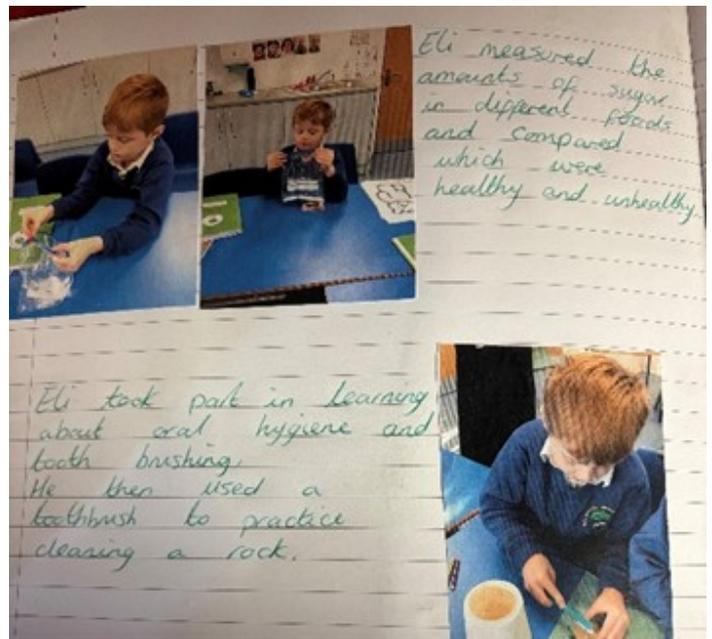


## Fagley RP



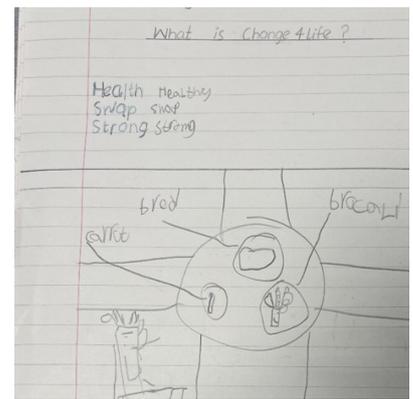
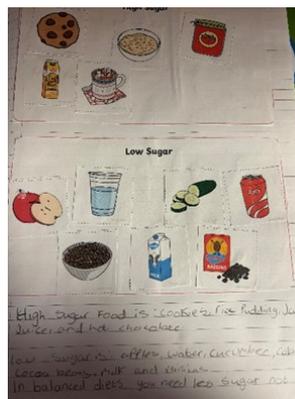
Fagley RP students took part in cooking sweet chocolate apple lollies in their cooking class. They enjoyed decorating them to their specification and taking them home to share with loved ones.





# Hollingwood

At Hollingwood we have been learning about Healthy Eating. In Drawing Club we watched the 'Change 4 Life' adverts from the TV and found out which foods have healthy benefits and which foods are not so good for us. We created a display comparing how much sugar was in some of our favourite foods – and some alternative choices



We have had a busy term with lots of challenges for children and staff. But we have ALL made progress and are very happy

This week several pupils were able to take part in Bikeability with their peers across the school.

Some pupils were already very confident, some had never ridden before, but everyone improved.

Miriam said she had never ridden a bike, and in under an hour, learned to ride without any support at all. She was very nervous at the start but very confident at the end, and extremely pleased with herself!



# Miriam Lord

# Deaf and MSI Children and Young People Service



16<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2026 is **Sign Language Week**, and our team has been raising awareness and celebrating by organising events and assemblies across our three resourced provisions at Gurlington, Swain House and Hanson.

**Hanson Delta Academy Resourced Provision** pupils have been learning all about the Milan conference in 1880 where the use of sign language in education was banned, and assemblies have been delivered to the whole school to share this interesting history:

## Did you know that before 1880:

- All deaf schools used sign language and pupils were taught by deaf teachers.
- Deaf communities were strong
- Many deaf people went on to become Lawyers, Scientists, Artists and Headteachers

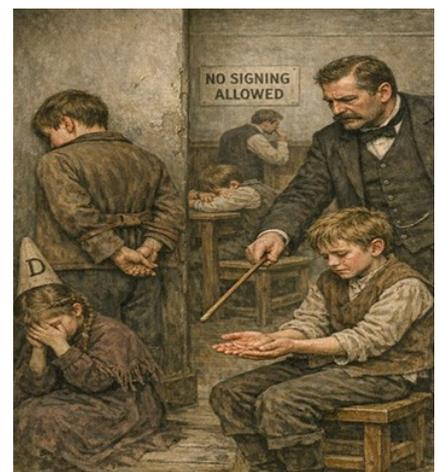


**BUT in 1880 at the second International Conference of the Education of the Deaf in Milan, the use of Sign Language was banned.**

- 164 representatives went to the conference and only one of the was deaf
- 154 people voted to ban the use of sign language in education
- Deaf teachers lost their jobs, and deaf children were punished for using sign language and struggled to access education

It wasn't until the 1980s when schools began to use sign language again to educate deaf children.

At the 21<sup>st</sup> International Congress on the Education of the Deaf in 2010 the decisions made in 1880 were officially rejected and an apology was issued



## The British Sign Language (BSL) Act 2023

BSL was officially recognised as a language of England, Scotland and Wales

The Government must promote BSL

Deaf people must be involved in decisions

**Girlington Primary School Resourced Provision** pupils took part in a whole school assembly signing lesson led by our very talented Resourced Provision pupils, who were their teachers for the afternoon. This was a great start to Sign Language Week, where the RP children thoroughly enjoyed being in charge as teachers! The children in assembly showed a lot of enthusiasm and really enjoyed learning BSL from their deaf peers. SLW celebrations will continue with a cupcakes sale and all the children at Girlington Primary have been invited to wear blue on one of the days, where they can contribute a voluntary donation of £1 (for the British Deaf Association).



**Swain House Resourced Provision** started by introducing Sign Language Week 2026 during the headteacher's assembly, where the whole school learnt and signed 'Happy Sign Language Week' together. The children in the Resourced Provision and Mrs Robinson have been busy creating and delivering a fun and exciting activity pack for each class in school including BSL flashcards, puzzles and colouring activities to complete throughout the week. They have also enjoyed painting a Sign Language Week 2026 banner in the colours blue and yellow to represent the colours of the Deaf flag



**The Support Team for Deaf Children** have been promoting Sign Language Week and some of the schools they visit have signed up to the free lessons that are available to schools via Signature School of Signs and will be delivering them over the week.

# Medical Needs Hospital Education Service (MNHES)

## Primary

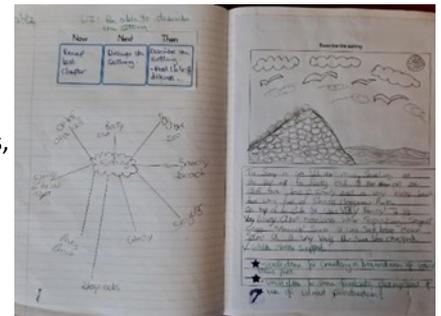
What a wonderfully busy few weeks it has been in the Primary team! Our lovely children have continued to shine, filling the classroom with laughter, smiles and endless energy!

We are so proud to say that our attendance has also increased this term and this is having a huge impact on attainment here at MNHES. It is a joy to see the children so proud of what they are achieving.

In **English** lessons the focus has been on the books Farmer Duck and The Iron Man.



The children have produced some wonderful pieces of work looking at characters feelings in Farmer Duck as well as describing the different jobs that are taking place in the story.



For the Iron Man the children have enjoyed creating some fabulous newspaper reports, menus for a restaurant that sells things iron related, as well as describing the setting in detail.

It's safe to say that they have all thoroughly enjoyed both texts!



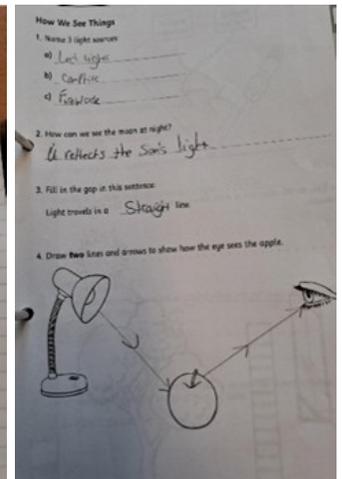
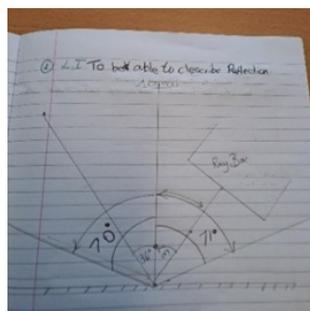
In **maths**, the pupils have been working on measurements, using and comparing different measures such as length, weight, capacity, as well as estimating measures and problem solving. A great practical topic!

Alongside measures, we have been working on our times tables. "Hit the Button" and "Bowling" interactive games are very popular in keeping our children engaged and becoming more confident in their times tables recall. Another favourite boardgame – Come Forth and Multiply – is requested at most sessions for those who want to challenge themselves. This involves choosing how many dice to roll and multiply together in order to try and reach the top of the game board first. It is fantastic to see the children challenge themselves by collecting the maximum 5 dice to multiply together to give them a better chance of winning the game!! They ensure they test the teachers too!!



**Could you multiply all these numbers? Our students love to challenge themselves!**

In **Science**, this half term, our young scientists have been busy investigating the fascinating world of **light**. The children learned how to draw clear and accurate **ray diagrams**, helping them understand how light travels and how shadows are formed. They also carried out a practical experiment exploring how the **size of shadows** changes with differing positions of the light source.



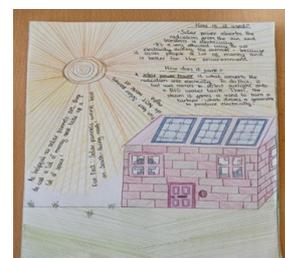
More recently, we have launched into the topic of Earth and Space, where the children have been discovering the wonders of our solar system. As part of this unit, pupils took part in an exciting investigation exploring how the **size of craters** is affected by the **size of asteroids**. The photos give you an idea of the fun we had as they tested different “asteroids” and observed and measured the craters they created.

It has been a fantastic term, full of hands on learning, scientific thinking, and plenty of moments worth



Year 8 students have recently begun learning Spanish. They have been learning basic greetings, numbers to 20, days of the week and our family. Next, we will be looking at food and drink and ordering items in a café.

In Science all year group have been looking at the different ways to generate electricity. We have made posters on renewable energy resources that can be used in the UK to generate electricity.



There have been lots of activity in Key Stage 4 during the Spring Term 2026. Year 10 and Year 11 students have been following the GCSE curriculum. All students in Year 10 are still involved in GCSE studies in preparation for examinations in June 2027 in at least Maths and English. Whilst Y11 students are coming to the conclusion of their GCSE studies. The Y11 students will sit their second round of mock examinations in March 2026 to give them valuable examination experience. In addition to intense work studying academic subjects, students have been building up their social, emotional and mental health skills and resilience through a variety of activities including discussion sessions, interactive games and exercise sessions. With a focus this half term on positive interactions including emotional intelligence and the world around us.

Check-in activities have now been formalised with a Theme of the Week in place. Students have enjoyed learning about Internet safety.



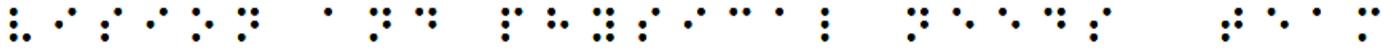
It has been a busy time at Bradford Royal Infirmary and Airedale General Hospital. Moving wards at AGH was a particularly hectic day! We have been visiting some of our children at their home schools. These visits are really valuable and help us to build strong links so we can work closely with schools to give our students continuity. It also gives us chance to get new ideas to bring back and enhance our own curriculum. And a big thank you to teachers at Owlet Road for welcoming Kathy and Jan to observe them and develop their skills.

We are always looking for ways to make our lessons as fun and interactive as possible. Many of our students have complex special needs and we benefitted greatly from attending an online course about TACPACs. We have also invested in some new resources to help our SEND children develop their fine motor skills.

As well as working closely with schools we continue to work collaboratively with the medical and nursing staff, play leaders and mental health practitioners on the wards so we can fully meet the children’s needs.



# Vision and Physical Needs Team



## Physical Needs Team

The focus of our most recent parent survey was around access to sports clubs outside of school hours and Ann Gabriel from the team has been attending the West Yorkshire Disability Sports Regional Meetings to find out more! A new sport that is fully accessible is Kin- ball, which is a team game played with a large lightweight ball suitable for wheelchair users and there is a new Kin-ball and multisport session running every Saturday morning as part of Mixed Ability Sports activities at the Karmand Centre, Barkerend. For information about all the Mixed Ability Sports as well as other inclusive clubs happening in Bradford please see our page on Bradford Schools Online for more details! [Physical Needs Team | Bradford Schools Online](#) .



To support schools with inclusive sports day ideas we have been part of a regional network of specialist teachers who have met to put together some guidance for schools when planning sports days so all students can participate. This should be ready for the summer term and will be available on Bradford Schools Online. For specific advice around individual students, the team can of course give personalised advice.

## Vision Impairment Habilitation Team

Hanson Bus Experience The Vision Impairment Habilitation outreach team organised for a bus to visit Hanson so that VI students could experience getting on and off a bus, paying the driver and locating a seat. As they had the bus to themselves, they had the chance to explore the entire bus, something they would not normally be able to do. All the students enjoyed the experience.



## Hanson Delta Academy Resourced Provision for Vision Impaired Children and Young People

### Blind in Business Workshop

This term, we invited the charity Blind in Business to work with our secondary school pupils for the second year running on the theme of preparing for employment. Blind in Business is a UK-based charity that supports blind and partially sighted young people into employment. Their mission is to help students, school leavers, undergraduates, and graduates develop the skills, confidence, and knowledge needed to succeed in the world of work. The workshop focused on sharing real experiences of people's journeys into work, helping students understand the different paths available to them and the support they can access along the way. A key part of the session explored essential soft skills, including how to present themselves confidently, communicate effectively, and navigate conversations in the workplace. Students also discussed the topic of job interviews; particularly how much they may wish to disclose about their disability and how to approach those decisions thoughtfully. The workshop created a fantastic opportunity for students from both Outreach and the Resourced Provision to come together. It encouraged them to reflect on their strengths and celebrate the unique qualities they bring to any future workplace. We received lovely feedback from Jonathan and Joe, who delivered the session: "I just wanted to say thank you for organising such an enjoyable event last Friday. They were a great bunch of students who we thoroughly enjoyed working with." We are already planning further sessions and follow-up work. The atmosphere throughout the workshop was incredibly positive, and it was clear that all students benefited from the experience.

# Grove House Primary School

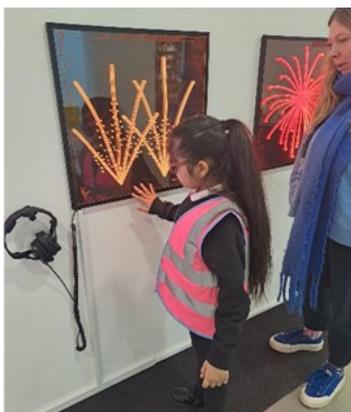
## World Book Day

At Grove House we celebrated World Book Day in March. As part of the celebrations the children and staff dressed up in some great book character outfits! We also celebrated the day through enjoying some tactile story sessions, alongside our friends from class. The children introduced their friends to braille and showcased how they use their brilliant braille skills to read. The children also explored tactile pictures alongside their friends and demonstrated how they use their tactile skills to make sense of illustrations. It was a lovely day, and the children really enjoyed celebrating reading alongside their friends.



## Trip to the Panto

In January, the children enjoyed a trip, alongside the pupils from Hanson Academy VI LARP, to the Alhambra theatre to watch an accessible showing of the Pantomime, 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarves'. The children and staff had a wonderful time! The fantastic songs and storytelling made it an engaging and exciting event for our children, and there were some very exciting moments, especially when the giant dragon appeared on the stage.



## Henry Moore Gallery Visit—'Beyond the Visual'

In March, the children and staff visited a fantastic exhibition at the Henry Moore Gallery in Leeds, called 'Beyond the Visual'. This exhibition showcased artwork made predominantly by artists with vision impairments and every object in the exhibition can be touched. The children were invited to touch, listen to and even smell the artwork throughout the exhibition. After visiting the exhibition, the children enjoyed an open-ended, multi-sensory art workshop, where again, they were encouraged to use all their senses to create some beautiful pieces of art. This included using tactile materials to create fantastic sculptures- you can see Mohammed Ali stood next to his in the photo below, looking very proud!

The trip was very successful and helped to demonstrate to our children that art can be accessible for them, and can be something they can enjoy now and in the future.

