



**KENT CONTINUUM OF NEED
AND PROVISION CASE STUDIES:
WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE, THEIR
FAMILIES AND CARERS**



By Schools, For Schools

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Mainstream Primary School Case Studies

Lyminge CE Primary School- A nurturing, inclusive community built on partnership: A whole-school Case Study

Contact

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Brief description/ overview

At Lyminge Church of England Primary School, inclusion is not a strategy—it is a shared belief that underpins every aspect of school life. Leaders and staff are committed to ensuring all pupils have access to a broad, balanced, and ambitious curriculum, adapted to meet individual needs so every child can thrive.

Parents describe Lyminge as a family—a warm, welcoming environment where every child is known, valued, and supported. This deep sense of belonging is one of the key reasons families choose the school. Parents are confident that staff will “do whatever it takes” to help their children succeed, both academically and emotionally.

Around 17% of pupils are supported at SEN Support, with the most common areas of need relating to communication and interaction, particularly autism and sensory processing differences. Wherever possible, pupils with EHCPs learn alongside their peers in mainstream classes, supported through personalised adaptations and creative deployment of adults to ensure the right balance of structure, flexibility, and nurture.

To strengthen provision for social, emotional, and mental health needs, the school is embedding the Zones of Regulation and developing calm, sensory-friendly breakout areas. The library and wellbeing room provide safe, quiet spaces for reflection and regulation. The wellbeing room, led by a trained ELSA, offers targeted emotional literacy and nurture sessions as well as a space for children to reset and rebuild confidence.

Outdoor learning is a defining feature of the school’s inclusive ethos. The phased introduction of OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) has transformed playtimes, creating rich, inclusive experiences that promote creativity, cooperation, and wellbeing. Parents have contributed materials and ideas, reinforcing the school’s community spirit. All pupils also take part in Forest School sessions, benefiting from the therapeutic and social advantages of outdoor learning.

Every aspect of school life—from the environment to the curriculum—is designed to promote connection, regulation, and independence. Lyminge’s success lies in its belief that when children feel safe, seen, and supported, they can achieve their very best.

An overview of what we did

Working with Children, Parents, and Families

Lyminge’s inclusive approach is built on trust, communication, and collaboration. Leaders recognise that partnership with parents is central to pupil success and work proactively to nurture those relationships.

Following the pandemic, the school prioritised rebuilding connections with families, ensuring shared understanding of inclusive practice and realistic expectations. Parents are encouraged to see school as a partner in developing their children’s independence, resilience, and emotional literacy.

Parent workshops are now an established feature of school life. Initially termly, their success and *growing attendance* led to their continuation each term. Topics—driven by parent feedback—include wellbeing, speech and language, and autism awareness. These sessions have become powerful community touchpoints, fostering trust and mutual understanding.

Parents describe Lyminge as a place of teamwork and empathy. Informal networks, such as the Parent Space WhatsApp group, extend support beyond the school gates, offering a safe space for parents to share advice and encouragement. Leaders and teachers are approachable and responsive, arranging meetings swiftly and communicating openly.

A key strength of the school’s community partnership is its active and dedicated Parent and Friends Association (PFA). The PFA plays a vital role in supporting both wellbeing and enrichment across the school. Most recently, they have agreed to fund *parent packs*—storybooks and resources to help families talk to their children about loss and bereavement. They also contribute to wider enrichment opportunities, such as funding visiting theatre groups, helping to bring the curriculum to life and provide joyful shared experiences for pupils.

Parents consistently praise the school’s responsiveness and care:

“At Lyminge, the staff met us at the car every morning and supported my son into school calmly and kindly. They listened to everything I suggested—nothing was too much trouble. The teachers were so accommodating and understanding—there were no time limits, and they allowed my son to use tools like anxiety bracelets to help him

feel secure. I honestly felt I could have asked for the earth, and the school would have found a way to make it work. The focus was always on my child being happy.”

Another parent described the school’s swift and proactive response following their child’s dyslexia assessment:

“After my child was assessed for dyslexia, the SENDCo and class teacher acted immediately. Resources and strategies were put in place both at school and at home, and the support made a huge difference straight away. I always feel confident that if I raise a concern, it will be listened to and acted on without delay.”

Parents emphasise that there is no sense of needing to “battle” for support. Instead, they describe a culture of empathy and shared problem-solving, where leaders consistently ask, “What can we do to help?” This partnership has reduced family stress and improved pupil wellbeing, with children no longer feeling the need to “mask” at school—resulting in calmer, happier home lives.

As one parent summarised:

“At Lyminge, there’s no judgment—just care, communication, and teamwork. The school supports the whole family, not just the child. Their formula is simple: Happy Parents, Supported Children.”

Impact

Lyminge’s inclusive, family-centred approach has had a significant and sustained impact. Pupils with additional needs demonstrate greater confidence, improved emotional regulation, and stronger engagement in learning. The creation of calm spaces, the expansion of ELSA support, and the introduction of OPAL play have all enhanced wellbeing and social connection.

Parents express high levels of trust and satisfaction, describing the school as proactive, empathetic, and deeply responsive. Early identification and timely intervention ensure pupils make strong progress from their starting points, and families feel genuinely included in every decision.

Lyminge CE Primary exemplifies how inclusive practice, emotional intelligence, and authentic partnership can transform both outcomes and experiences—for children, their families, and the wider school community.

Temple Ewell Church of England Primary School- Building a nurturing community- A whole-school case study

Contact

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Brief description/ overview

At Temple Ewell Church of England Primary School, inclusion and wellbeing are at the heart of everything the school does. The school's long-serving SENDCo, who has been part of the community since 1996 and in role since 2014, combines deep local knowledge with specialist expertise as an Advanced Skills Teacher and trauma-informed practitioner. She acts as an emotionally available adult, providing continuity of care and trusted relationships throughout the week.

Temple Ewell is part of the Aquila Trust, and the SENDCo plays a leading role in supporting and mentoring new SENDCos across the trust, modelling reflective, research-informed practice. Her ongoing commitment to professional learning ensures that provision continuously evolves in response to pupils' needs and emerging best practice.

The school's ethos is built on strong relationships, stability, and a genuine sense of family. Staff, pupils, and parents describe a nurturing community where children feel safe, known, and valued. A stable and motivated staff team contributes to this sense of consistency and care, underpinned by high expectations and a shared belief that every child can thrive when their emotional needs are met first.

Wellbeing is central to the school's offer. With three trained ELSAs, two nurture-trained staff, Mental Health First Aiders, and a Sports and Wellbeing Coach, the school provides an extensive range of emotional and therapeutic support. Staff receive regular supervision from the Trust Educational Psychologist, supporting reflective practice and timely intervention.

The physical environment has been carefully designed to promote emotional regulation and inclusion. The site features a sensory garden, outdoor sensory circuits, nurture spaces, and adaptable breakout areas. Zones of Regulation are used consistently in every classroom, and personalised lanyards help children communicate their emotions and needs. Every available space is used creatively to support wellbeing and readiness to learn.

The school's culture of inclusion extends beyond the classroom. Every Key Stage 2 pupil represents the school in some form of sport or activity—competitive or otherwise—and the majority of EYFS and Key Stage 1 pupils also take part. Notably,

100% of pupils with SEND represent the school, reflecting a culture of belonging, participation, and pride.

This combination of relational practice, staff stability, and emotionally intelligent leadership ensures that Temple Ewell is a place where children and adults alike feel supported, valued, and empowered to do their best.

Temple Ewell Church of England Primary School exemplifies how trauma-informed leadership, relational practice, and intelligent assessment can transform outcomes for pupils and families. Through its unwavering focus on wellbeing, inclusion, and collaborative partnership, the school has built a community where every child is known, every parent is supported, and every member of staff is empowered to make a difference.

An overview of what we did

Working with Children and Parents

Temple Ewell's approach to inclusion is rooted in partnership—between staff, children, and families. Relationships are the cornerstone of the school's success, with trust, communication, and empathy driving daily practice.

Support for pupils is highly flexible and individualised, designed around both academic and emotional needs. Where necessary, bespoke weekly timetables are implemented; these provide a balance of nurture, therapy, enrichment, and learning, supported by consistent visual structures such as timetables and widgets. The SENDCo dedicates two afternoons each week to therapeutic work with children, receiving supervision from TISUK to support her practice. As a qualified Trauma-Informed Practitioner, she also facilitates parent-and-child therapy sessions to strengthen attachment and family resilience.

The SENDCo and staff team take a holistic approach, integrating SEND, pastoral, and safeguarding expertise to create bespoke plans that are continuously adapted to ensure they remain both effective and manageable. SENIA Clinics, jointly attended by the SENDCo and other relevant colleagues as necessary, provide a structured forum to review provision, analyse impact, and refine support strategies.

Parents are regarded as partners in the truest sense. The school's philosophy—to "care for every child as if they were our own"—is visible in daily practice. Support for families is highly personalised: from early-morning "soft landings" for anxious pupils to home visits and person-centred EBSA meetings, staff work with compassion and persistence to help families navigate challenges together. When necessary, staff will even collect children from home to ensure they arrive safely and calmly.

The school's monthly parent group, The Nest, provides a warm, informal space where parents share experiences, offer peer support, and access advice. Visiting speakers from the Emotional Wellbeing Practitioner Team deliver workshops on topics such as behaviour, anxiety, and emotional regulation, helping parents build knowledge and confidence.

The PTFA is an invaluable partner in this inclusive ecosystem, funding resources such as sensory equipment, Purple Mash, and Junior Language Link, as well as supporting trips and providing enhanced experiences for pupils throughout the school year. Through their fundraising, they have also enhanced the learning environment, creating outdoor classroom areas and decking to extend spaces for play and exploration.

Impact

Temple Ewell's partnership-focused approach has strengthened pupils' wellbeing, resilience, and engagement, while building confident, empowered families. Bespoke timetables, trauma-informed support, and targeted therapy ensure children's academic and emotional needs are met. Parents benefit from workshops, peer networks, and responsive communication, fostering trust and collaboration. The PTFA's support enhances learning opportunities and environments, creating a truly inclusive and nurturing school community.

The Wells Free School- This is Me

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For more information on this project, please see the NHS ND information pages [New projects: Kent & Medway ICS](#)

Brief description/ overview

'This is Me' is a joint meeting that takes place between parents, trained school staff and where appropriate the young person. The 'This is Me' Needs Summary tool looks at the nine areas of potential need presented in a child with neurodivergence who may or may not have a formal diagnosis. Areas covered are Speech and Language, Energy Levels, Attention and Impulse, Emotional Regulation, Motor Skills, Sensory Needs, Flexibility and Adaptability, Empathising and Systemising and Cognitive Ability.

Once completed, the tool leads to a more in-depth understanding of a child's needs and identifies areas that school can offer further adaptations and support to meet these. Where appropriate, the summary can be sent to a multi-disciplinary team at the central community NHS team to offer additional bespoke support on a case-by-case basis.

To date, the school has completed 45 Needs Summaries.

An overview of what we did

Five key members of staff in the school were chosen to receive the training in order to be able to facilitate a Needs Summary meeting. They were the Headteacher, Inclusion Leader, two class teachers (one of whom is now the Deputy Headteacher and the other is also a trained counsellor) and a teaching partner.

The school was part of a pilot whereby we were supported by the NHS team to complete the needs summary assessments before feeling confident enough to be able to complete them ourselves. During the pilot stages, parents were supported by the NHS team and they came in to work directly with the children individually, if needed.

The families we worked with were identified through discussion as a staff team, with parents and in some cases, external professionals. Some parents were nervous about taking part initially but we found that once families started to access the meetings, word spread and others were then keen to take part.

As the pilot came to an end, we continued to complete the Needs Summary assessments with our families and continue to complete these with identified families to this day. As a school, we complete the Needs Summaries prior to any referral being made so we can ensure that the needs of the individual children are being met and their families supported as much as possible.

Impact

Parental Feedback:

“The support has been great and the profile helped with communication with the school.”

“Profiling tool: It was really useful. There are so many parts of ND and it makes you think about all of them. It makes you think about needs and challenges rather than just the behaviour you are dealing with every day. Really highlighted the biggest needs first.”

“100% think the profile helped the school understand and they have put in more strategies that are really helping.”

“Both, the profile was really helpful to put everything on a page. But XXXX is what was really needed. I wanted the diagnosis to help with secondary school but now I’m wondering if he can do without it.”

“Yes. XXXX is more open with things and more able to tell adults what he is struggling with.”

“Is coping a lot better in the school – he wants to do things on his own, away from parents. For instance walking into school with a peer rather than his Mum. He doesn’t ‘whinge’ as much as he used to. Has stopped saying he doesn’t want to go to school. XXXX will remove himself if things get tough and then come back and carry on with work etc. It is nice to see his needs are being met.”

“I have high expectations of her and XXXX has challenged me about this and to try different things. I’m more accepting of who she is.”

“Biggest change is his school work. The school are putting in lots more Forest School activities and this has really helped him. He has written more in the last 3 months than in the previous 2 years. His behaviour in school has improved and this is because the school is more aware of XXXX’s needs. He is being told off less and this means he is happier and he is loving the praise he is now getting. Even his speech has improved, he is using more words and holding longer conversations. XXXX’s concentration has got better but this may be due to the environment at school. The school has made changes that will help in the future.”

Staff Impact:

For staff, the knowledge and insight they gained into understanding their individual pupils has been invaluable. It has helped a much greater understanding of how neuro-divergent needs can be met in the classroom and wider community and has supported the building of truly meaningful, trusting relationships with the parent community.

Wider awareness:

The work we have done with This is Me has raised the whole school understanding of neuro-divergence in young people and the wider school community. Issues and strengths are now openly discussed and shared and parents and our pupils are comfortable to talk to each other and indeed support each other in a knowledgeable and caring way. As this community understanding has grown, additional support networks have developed and we now have a group of fathers (who are neuro-divergent themselves) who have formed a wider circle of support and have launched a new website and idea called 'NeuroJava' (see neurojava.co.uk).

Pupil on a Page:

The school now uses the This is Me Needs Summary as part of our Pupil on a Page document. This is an information document for each pupil in the school.

Mainstream Secondary School Case Studies

Tunbridge Wells Girls Grammar School- Safe School
Contact sue.waddington@twggs.kent.sch.uk
Brief description/ overview ‘Safe school’ – Pupil voice and establishing relationships as a fundamental aspect of SEN provision.
An overview of what we did Transition work: For pupils with SEN joining the school in Year 7 and Year 12. Face to face and in depth meetings with parents/pupils in term 6 prior to transition (based around ‘This is Me’ model). Absolute focus on pupil strengths and discussion of prior provision (what has and hasn’t worked) and provision moving forward. Pupils with SEN invited in on first INSET day to alleviate anxieties built up over the long summer break and re-familiarise themselves with the school site and key staff. Relationships with Parents/Carers: Transition meetings and open lines of communication Key staff well known to parents – building of trust and collaborative working relationships. Open door policy. Positive language and rhetoric around SEN All forward facing staff trained to deliver meetings in line with the ethos of school inclusion (positive language, solution focused, safe space for parent/pupil voices to be heard) Parent coffee mornings each term provide a space for parents of pupils with SEN to chat and share their experiences VIP Club – SEN C&I/homework club which aims to give parents/pupils with SEN one day a week of respite at home from the demands of school

Pupils:

Pupils included in meetings as much as possible.

Safe space to express concerns and worries without fear of recrimination.

Safe teams around pupils so that they are not relying on one member of staff

Safe spaces in school and building of trusting relationships.

Intervention groups:

C&I/homework Club (VIP), Creative groups (Chat and Craft, Calm Club) Groups encouraging engagement with the outside world/community – The Ripple Effect. SpLD groups e.g. dyslexia support group, executive function group.

1:1 weekly check-ins with HLTAs/Wellbeing/Key Staff – focussing on building skills to support wellbeing and resilience.

Pupil voice embedded in SEN register.

Impact**Transition work:**

Knowing each individual pupil before they cross the threshold of school has enabled us to make sure that provision is in place from day 1. Pupils and parents feel connected with the school community. Pupils with most significant needs have been able to manage the transition to secondary with very few problems. We have been able to reassure parents about inclusion in school, setting the tone and demonstrating that each child is valued and supported.

Pupils who have struggled to attend Primary have been able to engage fully with school.

Parents:

Positive working relationships with parents have enabled us to have open and constructive conversations. Parents know that they can contact us with any concerns and this has also helped to inform school policy e.g. on homework. The Coffee morning is particularly successful in helping parents whose children have SEND feel less isolated – there is a WhatsApp group and parents regularly communicate with each other and share advice.

Pupils:

Potential EBSA pupils are attending school. PA rates significantly reduced by over 10%. SEN pupils are fully integrated into the school community. Pupils with SEN

perform at least in line with their peers at GCSE/A Level – 2024 A Level pupils with SEN outperformed all other groups.

PRU Case Studies

City and Coastal College- Building relationships: A whole-school case study

Contact

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Brief description/ overview

- The City and Coastal College is part of The Canterbury Academy Trust; DfE Number 886/5421.
- The provision operates as the Pupil Referral Unit for the Canterbury District, with the addition of The Abbey School in Swale.
- The provision caters for up to 52 students.
- City and Coastal College provide provision for students in KS3 and KS4
- The IYFA meetings are facilitated by an independent chair – Mr Philip Wicker. There are approximately ten meetings per year.
- External Quality Assurance happens three times a year, two schools per visits. These QA visits are then formally discussed at Quality Assurance Meetings.
- City and Coastal College utilise the facilities based at The Canterbury Academy, providing opportunities in Construction, Hair and Beauty, Chefs Academy and use of the sports facilities.
- Students also have access to the woods, which provides engagement, work experience and team building.
- Students can also access the Canterbury Bike Project in Canterbury, to gain work related qualifications.
- A qualified counsellor is onsite 2 days per week/ Sexual Health Nurse/ School Nurse are in regular attendance.
- City and Coastal Colleges also engage with many external services, such as WAWY and sports connect via the VRU.

An overview of what we did

At City and Coastal College, relationships with families are the foundation of success. Engagement begins before a pupil starts, with parental meetings involving the home school, the College, and the family. These meetings are open and honest, setting a collaborative tone and building a shared plan to meet the child's needs. Pupils are also actively involved, ensuring their voice is heard and valued from the outset.

Staff prioritise building trust quickly, emphasising kindness, support, and care to reshape the narrative of education for both pupils and families. Parents are

continually engaged through daily 9:15 phone calls if a pupil is absent, follow-up calls, home visits, and additional contact where needed. This regular communication has significantly improved attendance and strengthened relationships.

Positive reinforcement is central to practice. Families receive celebratory phone calls, postcards, and updates highlighting success, which builds confidence and pride. Parents are invited to termly Parents' Evenings, with a particular focus on Key Stage 4 pupils in Years 10 and 11, and regular updates for Key Stage 3 families. Where challenges arise, the College seeks restorative solutions: no detentions are issued directly to pupils, but staff work with parents to reinforce expectations, maintain consistency, and prioritise "catching pupils in." Reintegration meetings following suspensions are framed around fresh starts and moving forward together.

Support also extends to practical measures: families are reimbursed for travel through weekly BACS payments, while additional help is arranged in partnership with home schools to ensure parents feel supported. This holistic approach not only strengthens family-school partnerships but also provides pupils with a secure foundation from which they can thrive.

Impact

The College's approach has a transformative impact on pupils and families. Parents consistently report restored confidence in education, underpinned by strong communication, trust, and shared responsibility. Pupils benefit from a rich curriculum, diverse experiences, and a consistent framework of support that enables them to re-engage with learning and prepare for reintegration into mainstream settings.

SRP Case Studies

Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys- Supporting pupils with EBSA profiles
Contact Charlotte Speed cspeed@thelangton.kent.sch.uk
Brief description/ overview This work focused on supporting students with an EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) profile, addressing a growing need within the school to provide tailored, compassionate interventions for students experiencing significant barriers to school attendance due to emotional wellbeing.
An overview of what we did This work focused on supporting students with an EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) profile, addressing a growing need within the school to provide tailored, compassionate interventions for students experiencing significant barriers to school attendance due to emotional wellbeing. Recognising that traditional approaches were often insufficient for this cohort, the school adopted an individualised, relationship-based model of support. In one case, support began through regular, informal meetings in a community café and or at the family home to establish trust and begin building a positive connection with the student. As the relationship developed, these meetings transitioned to the school's café setting or small, quiet space within the school, gently introducing the student to the school environment in a low-pressure way. This gradual reintegration was underpinned by frequent check-ins with both the student and their parent, ensuring open communication and a shared understanding of progress and needs. The approach emphasised flexibility, creativity, and the importance of strong, consistent relationships. Over time, the student began reintegrating into school, demonstrating that with patience, empathy, and a willingness to think outside the box, meaningful progress can be achieved. This work highlights the value of personalisation and collaboration in effectively supporting students with EBSA.
Impact The school's personalised and bespoke approach to supporting students with Emotionally Based School Avoidance has had a demonstrably positive impact, both academically and in terms of student wellbeing. By prioritising individual needs,

building trusting relationships, and implementing flexible, student-led reintegration plans, the school has been able to re-engage students who had previously disengaged from education entirely. One particularly powerful example is a student who joined the school with 0% attendance from their previous setting, experiencing significant anxiety around school. Through careful collaboration with the student and their family, and the use of tailored strategies that focused on wellbeing, gradual exposure, and consistent emotional support, the student was able to rebuild confidence and re-enter the learning environment at their own pace. As a result, the student not only improved their attendance and participation in lessons but went on to successfully achieve GCSEs. Their journey continued as they chose to return to the school to study A-Levels.

Sir Geoffrey Leigh Academy- Supporting primary to secondary transition

Contact

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Brief description/ overview

Initiating ongoing and regular contact with families during the primary to secondary transition phase.

Providing ongoing support and strategies for families to ease student anxiety.

An overview of what we did

- Initiate contact with families prior to starting secondary school (visits to primary setting/ tours of our school/ phone and social activities to build trust.
- Provide visual timetables and frequent check-ins to reassure the student that we are there for them.
- Include parents and carers in the handover process by; meeting them outside school every morning and afternoon, listening to their concerns, keeping them informed (verbal/ phone/ email).
- Initiate contacts with peers to ensure they have someone to assist them- introductions/ older students to guide them/ direct other students to sit with them and watch out for them
- Introduce them to teachers and support staff.
- The Hub where students can go when needed- they will always find a smile and support

Impact

Students quickly bond the support staff and their peers. They feel safe in the knowledge that they have someone and somewhere to go should they need it.

Parents feel supported and informed on their child's progress.

Special School Case Studies

<h3>Valence School- A collaborative approach to supporting pupils</h3>
Contact mstrange@valence.kent.sch.uk
Brief description/ overview One pupil's journey at Valence School This student's story is a powerful example of the life-changing support offered at Valence School. Their journey began in Year 3 following a serious brain injury sustained in an accident that deeply impacted their whole family. Prior to the accident, they attended a mainstream primary school, but due to the severity of their injuries, they were unable to return. Following a period of rehabilitation at an NHS trust which specialises in Acquired Brain Injuries, a carefully planned transition was put in place to support their return to education. Specialists from the hospital worked closely with Valence School's primary staff, ensuring that their needs were met in a structured and supportive environment.
An overview of what we did A Collaborative Approach to Support A multi-disciplinary team (MDT) worked together to ensure they had access to crucial physical management, therapy, and education. Their mother reflected: "Valence is the perfect school as it was able to give the education needed in conjunction with the therapies that are so important in their rehabilitation. Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, and Speech & Language Therapy were all fully integrated throughout their school day. Trained NHS specialists were based at Valence, meaning minimal disruption to their education. The close partnership between the school and the NHS ensured that any necessary equipment was provided promptly, supporting their progress in an efficient and timely manner." Academic and Personal Development

Due to the impact of their brain injury, they faced challenges with information retention. Despite this, they engaged in Entry Level and GCSE qualifications during Key Stage 4. However, it was in Sixth Form—when they started boarding—that they truly began to flourish. With the support of a dedicated Keyworker, an academic tutor, and a continued programme of complex therapeutic input, they were able to focus on both their studies and growing independence.

As a residential student, they nurtured their passion for creativity, particularly in Art & Design. With staff support, they explored college placements in this field and gained the confidence to take the next step beyond Valence. To help them meet entry requirements for their chosen course, the school prioritised the necessary subjects, including an AS Level in Art. Both the school and Residential Education Provision (REP) staff worked together to ensure they could successfully complete their coursework.

Impact

A Lasting Connection

During their time at Sixth Form, they also developed a small business, designing greetings cards and gifts that they sold at the Valence School shop, *Valence on the Green*, in Westerham. This initiative continues today, even after leaving Valence, and they still volunteer at the shop on Saturday mornings. Their journey at Valence School culminated in a significant milestone—they left a year earlier than expected, having secured a place at a local college, with funding support in place. Their story highlights how Valence School’s holistic approach—integrating education, therapy, and independence skills—enabled them to take control of their future with confidence.

A summary of effective strategies evidenced in the Kent Case Studies for Working with Children and Young People, their Families and Carers

1. Build Strong Family Partnerships

- Engage parents/carers early and proactively, especially during times of change or concern.
- Maintain open communication through regular check-ins, drop-ins, and informal networking opportunities.
- Treat parents as genuine partners in decision-making.
- Provide opportunities for mutual support, enabling families to connect and reduce isolation.

2. Prioritise Pupil Voice and Individualisation

- Actively listen to pupil voice and embed it in planning and reviews.
- Focus on strengths and interests alongside needs.
- Provide safe spaces, trusted adults, and flexible support plans.
- Use personalised, relationship-based approaches, adapting support to individual circumstances.

3. Ensure Thoughtful Transition Planning

- Hold detailed pre-transition meetings with pupils and families.
- Offer early familiarisation with new staff and sites.
- Provide structured, ongoing support to sustain confidence after transition.

4. Develop Staff Expertise and Positive Culture

- Train staff to use consistent tools and frameworks to assess and support need.
- Raise whole-school awareness of neurodivergence and inclusion.
- Promote a positive, solution-focused ethos in all communication.
- Collaborate with external professionals and community services.

5. Offer Creative and Flexible Interventions

- Adapt curriculum and environments to remove barriers (e.g. outdoor learning, creative and wellbeing groups).
- Provide practical supports such as visual timetables, peer mentoring, and safe spaces.
- Use interventions that strengthen resilience, social connection, and engagement.

6. Monitor Impact and Celebrate Progress

- Track attendance, engagement, and wellbeing alongside academic progress.
- Gather and act on feedback from parents and pupils.
- Share success stories across the community to inspire confidence and trust.
- Celebrate progress, resilience, and strengths — not just outcomes.