



# ANNUAL PROSPECTUS 2020-21

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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 the provision of high quality services has created a very special organisation in the North East of England. The Foundation provides two schools for children aged 3-19 years, Post 19 education in a specialist college, residential provision, an external training programme, therapy services, a school for parents and a family support centre. Adult services include day care provision and a wide range of residential and living options.

Northern Counties School is approved by the Department for Education to provide all age (3-19 years) special for children who have a hearing impairment or visual impairment, those with profound and multiple learning disabilities and autistic spectrum disorder all of whom require education, therapy and care delivered through a trans-disciplinary approach. We work closely with Percy Hedley Foundation Children's Residential Services who operate Tees House Children's Home and offer full time and short break respite care here on site.

The school is located in pleasant grounds within easy walking distance of Newcastle upon Tyne city centre. The school is a non-maintained special school with a board of governors which is made up of governors from the Board of Trustees of the Percy Hedley Foundation together with co-opted governors, staff (both teaching and non teaching) and parents. It is subject to inspection under The School Inspection Act 1996, through the OFSTED framework for the Inspection of Schools. In our most recent Ofsted Inspection, March 2017, the school was graded as good with the Lead Inspector stating,

*“Leaders identify and assess the full extent of the needs of each pupil meticulously. They ensure that sufficient resources are in place to meet the needs of each pupil so that most achieve good outcomes. Leaders’ focus on pupils’ safety and welfare is highly effective. The needs of pupils who have hearing impairment, autistic spectrum disorder or profound and multiple learning difficulties are equally well met. Precise teaching, which is well matched to pupils’ needs, ensures that most pupils make good progress from their different starting points. Their progress in developing effective communication skills is particularly strong. The range of therapists and the nursing team make a positive contribution to the progress pupils make. Opportunities for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are threaded across the school day. As a result, pupils learn about their own and other people’s rights. The behaviour intervention team provides exceptionally effective support to pupils who face significant challenges in learning to manage their emotions and responses to the world. This approach leads to outstanding progress in the personal development of this group of pupils.”*

Children thought 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 when we will be happy to answer questions and give advice if this is requested. All children considered for admission or assessment placements will have statements of special educational needs, education health care plans or be in the process of having this addressed.

# EDUCATION AT NORTHERN COUNTIES SCHOOL

## 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.

## 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 to feel safe and develop self-confidence, respect, consideration for others and independence in order to be a positive and fulfilled member of society.

## School Services

The school provides a specialist curriculum for each of its populations: pupils with hearing impairment/deafness, visual impairment, profound and multiple learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder. The attached service leaflets explain the different services we offer to each of our populations in detail.

# THE CURRICULUM

The school offers a highly differentiated curriculum for each population with a high level of support for all children. Through the curriculum many opportunities are provided for children to develop their academic, practical and creative abilities within the context of a caring, supportive environment sensitive to individual needs and personal growth.

A wide range of subjects and activities is delivered and we consider national guidance in order to plan our own programmes and meet the needs of each child. For some children, particularly those with complex special educational needs, materials and activities 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 need.

Within the school, early learning goals and all subjects of the National Curriculum (except a Modern Foreign Language) are provided through means appropriate to each child's individual needs. All children and young people are taught in class groups which are generally organised according to their needs and with regard to age although, where necessary, we alter groups according to ability and the teaching requirements of individuals. Specialist rooms are available for some lessons including food technology and design technology.

## Deaf / Hearing Impaired Department

The children in this population are taught in small class groups of no more than eight and there will be several support workers attached to the group. Each class has a teacher/teacher of the deaf and staff have a minimum of level 2 BSL. Lessons are delivered in a Total Communication approach using oral English, Signed Supported English and British Sign Language in addition to written and pictorial systems of communication, as appropriate. Great effort is made to promote the most suitable communication methods for each pupil and where possible speaking and listening skills are actively encouraged. Speech and language therapists provide individual and group input on a range of specific approaches and strategies including social communication skills, grammar development and phonological awareness. Pupils also have access to a number of deaf staff who provide excellent role models and support our high expectations for future opportunities in adulthood.

Lessons are delivered based around 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, geography, history, RE, art, music, PE, swimming, design technology and food technology.

In our 14-19 group a range of external accreditation is offered including Entry Level Qualifications, Unit Awards, ASDAN courses, the Duke of Edinburgh's award and Ascentis qualifications at Levels 1 and 2 as appropriate to the needs of the student.

Specialist occupational therapy and physiotherapy staff work into these groups to address individual needs plus some key areas of the curriculum including life skills to promote independence and individual mobility and gross motor programmes 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 use of iASEND, end of Key Stage procedures and other examinations, as appropriate. Therapists use a wide range of assessment tools to record progress in all aspects of

the child's development. The school has access to an educational psychologist as part of the wider organisation. Parents and professionals are able to evaluate a child's progress together in terms of personal development and in the context of specific standardised measures. They are kept informed of children's development and achievements through Annual Review procedures and regular contact with the school.

## **ASD Department – The Hillcrest Centre and The Armstrong Centre**

We offer a specialist service for children on the autistic spectrum with additional learning and communication difficulties, who require an individualised, highly structured and integrated educational and therapeutic provision delivered within a Total Communication approach.

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. Our curriculum and the way we plan and teach our pupils has the triad at its centre. We use the SCERTS framework to underpin planning and assessment and prioritise learning and the development of Social Communication and Emotional Regulations skills. These skills are essential to enable our pupils to access the curriculum and wider world.

Our lively, engaging and innovative curriculum is thematic and reviewed every three years, which enables us to adapt to pupil cohorts and take into account 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 Department, during each termly enrichment week. We provide a flexible teaching environment, with pupils following individual programmes, which are 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 programme. 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. An emphasis on 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 highly structured programme and environment, with flexibility to adapt their day depending on arousal levels. Armstrong Centre pupils require a low arousal environment and highly structured teaching, but need lower levels of staff support.

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

## **PMLD Department**

We have a distinct population of children and young people who have combinations of very complex physical, sensory, learning and health needs. These children have significant physical disabilities, which affect their gross and fine motor skills and have severe/profound learning difficulties. They may have a hearing or visual impairment and some have both senses affected making their disability very complex hence the term "profound and multiple learning disabilities". In addition to their physical and learning needs, many of the children have significant health and feeding needs requiring close nursing supervision and medical care.

The curriculum for pupils with PMLD reflects the cross curricular and multidisciplinary nature of the work that we do. The curriculum is divided into three strands within which all of our sessions are embedded. The three strands of the curriculum are: Communication, Sensory Exploration and Physical Exploration. Cognitive development is embedded throughout the curriculum and promoted through all activities.

Highly structured and fully modified class programmes are provided by an integrated team of teaching staff, therapists and learning support workers. The focus is very much on individual programmes with an emphasis on multi-sensory approaches and experiences. Tasks and activities are structured carefully in order that they are relevant and purposeful for each pupil in order to maximise motivation; all activities are planned to enable learners to make sense of the world around them. We have an interactive, consistent and repetitive approach with activities presented over extended periods to allow children the time they need to process experiences and to develop and share their preference and interests.

## **Visually Impaired Students**

All pupils with a visual impairment work within a flexible teaching environment whereby pupils follow individual programmes which are based on our detailed knowledge of each child. Typically our visually impaired children will have an additional diagnosis, such as ASD, which impacts on their access to the curriculum and therefore they will be placed alongside children of a similar cognitive ability or with similar needs.

We are able to offer input from our teacher of the visually impaired as well as staff skilled in delivering specific programmes such as Braille and mobility approaches. We also use a variety of innovative approaches such as Intensive Interaction and Sensory Processing Programmes, whilst at the same time ensuring that each child has access to a broad, balanced and relevant sighted/non sighted age appropriate but developmentally matched curriculum, which fully meets their needs. An emphasis on functional skills, independence and communication is at the heart of our curriculum which ensures that all children and young people are provided with learning opportunities that recognise and celebrate their uniqueness, develop their full potential and allow them to fulfil their aspirations.

## **Therapy**

Therapy is provided to all children on an individual needs basis. We employ six full time equivalent speech and language therapists and six 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 into classrooms, often in joint teaching and therapy sessions which ensure all team members have a shared understanding of the child's needs and goals.

## **Assessment, Recording and Reporting Procedures**

Children's progress and development is carefully monitored and assessed by teaching staff and therapists. We use iASEND throughout school to record pupil attainment. All members of the team share their views and advice about children's development through regular dialogue, meetings and written reports. A very broad range of assessment tools are used by teachers and therapists to support the evaluation of pupil achievement at all levels of development. The therapists use a range of standardised and non-standardised tools to enable us to identify small steps of progress and thus plan for the next steps of learning.

Assessment in line with National Curriculum procedures is well established throughout the school. Continuous assessment takes place and is an essential element of the school's recording, reporting and reviewing system for each child.

A detailed Individual Education Plan is written at the annual review meeting based on the child's outcomes, as detailed in their Education Health Care Plan. Priorities for development form the basis of individual targets in addition to 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.

In accordance with legislation, children's Education Health Care Plans are reviewed annually. An updated report incorporating notes of 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 an integrated annual report and contribute views and comments regarding progress. Additional advice is sought, as appropriate, from other professionals to form an overview of the child. As national guidance is changing we are modifying our systems to incorporate the new education, health and care plans as they begin to be introduced.

Open mornings/evenings or individual appointments are organised regularly to enable parents to discuss their child's progress with teaching and therapy staff. In addition, frequent informal meetings to discuss progress and development are welcomed and can be arranged on request.



# SCHOOL FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

## Environment and facilities

The school is well equipped to meet the needs of its pupils with regard to their special educational needs. All classrooms are designed to suit the needs of the group 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 play areas and self-regulation play areas, food technology room, sports hall, and a family room.

Visual and auditory fire alarms are situated throughout the school and residence. 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 together 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.

## Catering and Domestic Facilities

The school has its own catering facility which provides good quality healthy meals for children and staff including a range of food suitable for particular dietary requirements. School meals are included as part of our fees. 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 five minibuses with special equipment to provide access for all children and staff.

## The School Records Department

There is a Records Department and Archive which houses historical information dating back to the foundation of the School in 1838. The Department has also linked closely with the Newcastle Museum Service in Blandford Street and located many fascinating documents and artefacts there for public access.

## Nursing

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

The nurses have a great deal of specialised knowledge in paediatrics: we are able to care for a wide range of complex medical conditions and conduct a range of specialist procedures as described within pupils' individual care plans. Parents are warmly welcomed to discuss their child's individual needs at any time, both prior to placement and once admitted to the school.

The school has regular input from Children and Young Peoples 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 hospitals in the region, and the North East Regional Cochlear Implant team visit children as required to ensure an optimum level of audiological support with minimal disruption to school attendances.

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**

Parents are encouraged to be involved in the life and work of the school and are always welcome. Visits to the classroom and to see resident children after school are valued by members of staff and contact can always be made to keep in touch or if ever there are concerns in relation to 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 the use of 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.

Parents are encouraged to make contact immediately if ever there are any concerns. The Headteacher is able to give advice should any matters give cause for 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 members of staff as appropriate. If a particular member of staff is not available, a message can be left 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.

The school keeps copies of National Curriculum or curriculum documentation, policy documents, schemes of work and other educational information that will be of interest to 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 answer-machine to allow messages to be left, if necessary.

## **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.

## **Absence**

It is very important that children attend school as much as possible. If a child is absent through illness parents should phone the school switchboard in order to inform the class teacher and, if necessary, the school nurse. These absences are authorised.

Holidays in school time are not encouraged, however if you feel that there is a really good reason for your child to be out of school then you can request that an absence is authorised by the Headteacher in advance of the planned absence. Please be aware that this may also need to be authorised by the Local Authority. 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 not been authorised. Where there are concerns about a pupil's absence then we will work closely with the family to improve this.

## SCHOOL ROLL

At the start of the autumn term 2020-21 school year there were 98 pupils on the school roll.

Department	Number
Primary (Early Years, Key Stages 1 and 2)	32
Secondary (Key Stages 3 and 4)	43
Post-16 (Key Stage 5)	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>

## GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

### The School Day

The school day begins at 09:00 each morning and continues until 15:30. There is a 15 minute break each morning. Lunch is at 12:00 and the lunch break is usually one hour 15 minutes. 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 the school on a daily basis and transport arrangements are such that the children arrive at school for 09:00 each day and leave school at 15:30.

Resident children whose homes are distant from the school may arrive later on Monday mornings and depart earlier on Fridays.

### Collective Worship

As a special school, we aim to provide appropriate adherence to the requirement for a daily act of collective worship so far as is realistic and practicable, because of the nature of the range of disabilities of our pupils. We are happy to discuss how we make provision for this requirement and how we organise various class and group assemblies as well as our 'special' whole school assemblies including collective worship. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from collective worship – please do not hesitate to make contact if you would like to discuss this further.

### Religious Education

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the religious education lessons which take place. 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 in order to develop pupils social, communication and physical skill. Many of these provide additional learning opportunities in many 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.

## **School Council**

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

## **School Code of Conduct**

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

All children, according to their abilities and levels of development, 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 promotes trust, honesty, respect and consideration for others at all times.

Misbehaviour or unacceptable interaction with peers or members of staff is dealt with 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.

## **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 issues of respect, responsibility, fairness and care in order that children are confident that any worries or complaints they have can be shared.

## **Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)**

Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE), including sex and relationships education (SRE), is an integral part in 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. If any concerns are felt about the content or handling of questions parents should inform the class team or the designated safeguarding lead, Jo Allen. 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 relationships 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 DfES (July 2000) and by consulting, involving and sharing additional information, parents feel confident about our approaches and are happy to support our work in helping our pupils through their physical, emotional and moral development.

## **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 take part 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 as part of their programmes of physiotherapy. A range of lunchtime clubs increases opportunities for sport and leisure activities.

## **Homework**

Home learning forms part of the children's overall education and is planned according to their age and ability and in conjunction with the family's needs. Homework may be provided by members of the class team to reinforce learning and to support the child's ability to generalise their knowledge from school to home and other contexts.

Arrangements vary according to the age and ability of the child and details are available from the Head Teacher.

## **School Uniform**

School uniform 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. The cost of school meals are currently included in the fees paid for the children by their supporting local authority. No charge is therefore made to parents.

## **Charges for School Activities**

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

# SCHOOL STAFF AND STRUCTURE

## The School Leadership Team (SLT)

The leadership team is responsible for directing and coordinating the overall management of the day to day running of the school. This includes Jo Allen (Headteacher), Claire Ramsay (Deputy Head), Julia Patterson (Assistant Head), Abi Cowie (Assistant Head – Autism), Louise Allport (Lead Practitioner - Therapy) and senior staff in key areas of the school.

## Teaching Staff

There are over 20 full or part-time teachers within the school. Teachers are additionally qualified as teachers of deaf children or visually impaired, PMLD or ASD or training through in-service courses to obtain these qualifications. Some teachers have dual qualifications. We have specialist teachers for art, design technology, computing and music.

The school employs tutors who have specialist roles within the school in areas such including BSL and PE/ swimming and has access to an educational psychologist who works within our Foundation. The school employs over 110 special support workers, including some higher level special support workers who are involved in work with all children and who give intensive support to meet the complex needs of our population. The health team comprises two experienced and qualified nurses, who between them provide nursing support throughout the school day as well as providing staff training.

The education of the children 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. Physiotherapy services are provided by the NHS and staff are 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. The sharing of information 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.

## ADMISSION TO THE SCHOOL

Percy Hedley Foundation provides a comprehensive assessment programme. Referrals can be made by parents, school or local authorities and initial discussion will ascertain whether an assessment will be offered. Often our assessment team will also visit the child either 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 (e.g. of the Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired, and Autistic Spectrum Disorder)
- Occupational Therapist
- Speech and Language Therapist
- NHS Physiotherapist

Recommendations of the child's needs would then be made and, whether they can be met within Northern Counties School. The school works within the context of the Children and Families Act

and Code of Practice in support of pupil/student and family preference regarding placement. However Local Authorities are responsible for provision and placement.

## School Governors

### Co-opted Governors

Angela Curran - **Chair**  
Susan Jopling - **Vice Chair**  
Ann Jolley  
Dawn Baker  
Amy Limmer  
Nadia Greuner  
Rachel Collum

### Parent Governors

James Turner  
Vacancy

### Staff Governors

Julia Patterson (Assistant Head)  
Nichola Blair

**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

Telephone and Minicom: (0191) 281 5821  
Fax: (0191) 281 5060  
School Website: [ncs.percyhedley.org.uk](http://ncs.percyhedley.org.uk) or [www.percyhedley.org.uk](http://www.percyhedley.org.uk)