

Education Support Officers

South Kent

Sam Pilcher HLTA and NVQ Level 4



I have been working for VSK since October 2012 supporting children and young people in a range of settings from Primary through to Secondary education. I am a HLTA with approximately 12 years' experience working in primary settings. I also have an NVQ Level 4 in Supporting Learning in Primary schools. I have recently attended training in Mental Health First Aid for Young People and Lego Therapy.

Vanessa Neal BSc (Hons)

Prior to joining VSK as an Education Support Officer, I worked in primary schools as a Wellbeing Coordinator supporting children to improve their emotional wellbeing, and therefore lead to greater educational outcomes. I have extensive experience of working with LAC and vulnerable children with social, emotional, behavioural and attachment difficulties, ASD and have supported transition from primary to secondary school. As well as working in mainstream settings, I have also worked in, and led, an offsite KS1/2 Nurture Provision providing both emotional and educational support for those children struggling in mainstream including those who were at risk of exclusion. I enjoy targeting individual and group emotional interventions, as well as resilience (being an accredited FRIENDS resilience programme facilitator), Drawing & Talking and am fully trained in Restorative Approaches. I have achieved my BACP Certificate in Counselling for working with Children and accompanying year-long Clinical placement through Place2Be. I am excited to be part of the South Kent VSK team to continue supporting children's emotional and educational needs.



Jo Rees BA (Hons)



I am a HLTA with 15 years' experience of working in primary settings. For seven of these years I worked as a specialist TA within a Speech and Language Unit which was situated on the primary school site and helped to provide intensive Speech Therapy Programmes and support for pupils whilst they worked in mainstream lessons. After qualifying as a HLTA I was asked to take on Cover Supervisor class teaching duties throughout the school including the Unit. Just before joining VSK, I achieved a Ba (Hons) in Childhood Studies including specialism in providing a range of support that includes academic, vocational, transition and emotional / behavioural support. I also have 22 years' experience of looking after young people on the Autistic Spectrum and have worked in the holidays and after school in nurseries and holiday clubs.

Abigail Ingram MA and PGCE

I joined VSK in 2013, and my role is to support children and young people in a range of education settings from Primary through to Secondary. I am a qualified teacher and have experience teaching children from nursery age up to Year 1. Prior to this, I taught young adults in Higher Education within a Sociology and Social Policy department. I also have an M.A. in Social Theory, which has helped me to understand the wider needs and wellbeing of CiC in the context of education and society. I have particular interests in attachment theory, and how children's early experiences impact on their learning. I really enjoy tutoring children and young people, as well as being able to develop holistic approaches to supporting behavioural and emotional needs. Since working for VSK, I have attended training in Youth Mental Health First Aid, Autism Awareness, and most recently completed a course on how to identify and target support for children with Speech and Language needs.



Lynn Griffiths HLTA

I am currently working towards a degree in Childhood Studies at Christ Church University and also have a Level 3 qualification with ABC Counselling and CLANSA level 3 in Childhood Studies.



East Kent

Emma Wills Ba (Hons) and GTP



As a teacher, I have over 10 years' experience in Key Stage 1 and 2 and the Early Years. I have undergone training in Wellbeing and Involvement and implementing the observational and assessment techniques learnt; have experienced the impact that they have on the education and wellbeing of children. I have always been interested in actively supporting children that need additional emotional and social support and enjoy helping them to succeed in the mainstream environment.

Lucy Southwood BSc (Hons) and PGCE

I qualified as a teacher in 1999 and began my career in London as a class teacher. I later became Ethnic Minority Achievement Co-ordinator which involved introducing whole school strategies and focused support for targeted groups to raise attainment. On moving to Kent in 2006 I joined KCC as an Individual Teacher with the Tuition Service where I assessed and taught pupils between the ages of 5-18, with a range of AEN, who were not currently in education and supported them back into school. I have attended various courses on ASD, ADHD, Mental Health and building resilience in Young People. I am particularly interested in developmental and neuro psychology and how these impact learning and well-being. I moved across to the VSK team in September 2015 and am enjoying being part of the Thanet team.



Laura Hunt BA (Hon) Childhood Studies (SEN Specialism)



I have worked for 11 years within primary school settings, from nursery to year 6 working with a wide range of children from various backgrounds and abilities. Before joining VSK I worked in a Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) working with children with children with special educational needs as well as running nurture groups. Having lived and worked in Swale all my life, I am excited to be part of the Swale team in supporting the young people of Kent.

Mandeep Viridi – BA (Hons) childhood Studies with SEN specialism

I have worked in a primary setting for the past 11 years supporting children who have English as additional language needs across the Early Years, KS1 and KS2. Whilst working I attended many courses to enhance my skills to develop a better practice to support the children to meet their additional needs. I achieved a course in Drawing and Talking therapy to support children with social and emotional needs. I am very excited to be a part of VSK and to be using my expertise as well as developing my skills and knowledge.



Sammy Fletcher BA (Hons)

I joined VSK in 2018, and my role is to support children and young people in a range of education settings from Primary through to Secondary. I am a qualified teacher and have experience teaching children from nursery age up to Year 10. I have also taught adults and their children via Kent Adult Education for KCC. I have worked with children in education for the past 13yrs using my skills in Mental Health First AID (MHFA), FRIENDS 'Resilient and Wellbeing program' and Bereavement 'Winston Wishes'. I really enjoy tutoring children and young people, as well as being able to develop holistic approaches to supporting behavioural and emotional needs.



Sandra Smith



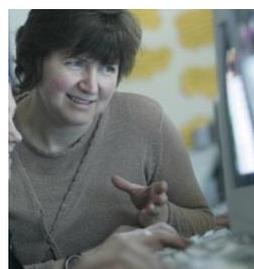
I have joined VSK after working 11 years in education during this time I worked as a Teaching assistant and then a classroom teacher. I have a degree in History and American Studies and gained my QTS in 2010. I have worked with Children in Care through my role as Designated Teacher for 4 years. During my time in school, I have worked with a number of students who found it difficult to engage with classroom education and also supported students who struggled with literacy.

Andrea Jordan BA(Hons) and PGCE

I qualified as a teacher in 2005 and have experience in Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Over the last five years I have worked predominately as a specialist 1:1 teacher planning and catering the sessions for the specific individual needs of each child in Literacy and Numeracy, while additionally offering pastoral support. I devised a spelling programme before joining VSK in 2018, which was successful, implemented through engaging displays, props and an interactive targeted approach. My degree in Social Policy has enabled me to look at different ways we, as a society can improve the welfare of individuals and families. Within this I undertook a 40,000-word dissertation on youth homelessness. I also have a Certificate in Social Sciences. After recently completing Nurture Training, I hope to use this so that I can make a real difference to the wellbeing of the children I work with and I hope to use my creativity through Art Therapy in the future.



Debbie Briant HNC Computing, HND Computer Support and HLTA



I am a HLTA with 10 years' experience of working in a secondary setting. I worked with a large range of classes and students with different abilities in the mathematics department. I ran a lunchtime maths homework club and a programming club after school. I was also responsible for running a Breakfast Club before school for students who required extra help with literacy and numeracy including working with students for whom English was not their first language. After school I was responsible for a successful Mathematics Outreach programme for primary age students along with their parents. I am a qualified technician and have extensive experience in evaluating, using and overseeing the use of curriculum software for learning and assessment.

Steve Green BA (Hons) and PGCE

Steve also have a Diploma in Social Work, a Part Time Youth Workers Qualification from London Borough of Bromley, PQSW Higher Child Care Award in Social Work, CMS and a Certificate in Counselling.



North and West Kent

Amanda Ormond – Nurture Group Accreditation



I have a Level 3 NVQ HLTA qualification as well as a Level2 qualification as a swimming instructor. At weekends I assist with the running of an U17s football team and hold a Level2 FA qualification in the treatment and management of sports injuries. I have taught PE and Human Physiology and Health (unqualified) at a KS4 PRU from 2005 to 2009 where I was also the lead for co-ordinating alternative curriculum activities, part of which was building a strong and lasting link with Challenger Troop who specialise in engagement of disaffected young people. I have experience of teaching in a secondary classroom as I was a Cover Supervisor for two years prior to working for VSK. I have a keen interest in working with disengaged adolescents with a focus on understanding SEMH. I have achieved a Certificate in Counselling and am nearing the end of achieving a Diploma in Youth Counselling with The Institute of Counselling. Since being with VSK I have attended many training sessions to improve my professional development with an emphasis on behaviour management, emotional well-being, Mental Health First Aid, Drug and Alcohol awareness and Adolescent Sexual Health (C Card Registered) amongst many others.

Wendy Richard

I have more than 12 years' experience working with children in KS1 and KS2. I have specialised in assisting students with Speech and Language difficulties and I am particularly interested in supporting students with Emotional Wellbeing challenges. I have supported, on both a 1:1 basis and within small groups, by implementing new strategies to enable them to access the curriculum successfully.



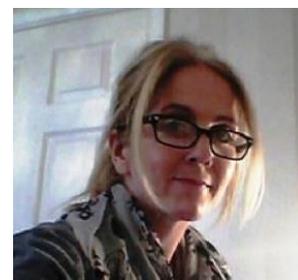
Karen Stephens HLTA



I began working within the primary setting 18 years ago as a TA and about 10 years ago became a HLTA mainly working in year 6 where I supported children of various abilities - both higher and lower ability. I especially enjoyed working with children who had social and emotional difficulties which resulted in behaviour challenges. For the past year I worked as an unqualified teacher teaching my own year 5 class. I joined VSK in September 2017 as an Educational Support Officer to help support children with emotional wellbeing difficulties as this is an area that I am particularly interested in.

Lisa Thistlethwaite NVQ Level 2 and BDA Level 3

Lisa is currently studying towards a BSC Hons in Mathematics and its Learning.



Helen Humphrey B.Ed (Hons)



I qualified as a teacher in 1990 and spent my teaching career working with primary school children. When my own children were young I took a career break and returned to work as a Teaching Assistant working with children on a 1:1 basis as well as delivering interventions to small groups. I then took a job as a Special Needs Coordinator in a local school and completed the required PGCE qualification. I was responsible for supporting all children with Special Educational Needs from 3 – 11 years old. I joined VSK as an Educational Support Officer in September 2018 and I am looking forward to using my knowledge and experiences to support those children who are in care.

Angela Courtney BA Hons Social Work

I joined Virtual Schools Kent in September 2018. My background is mainly in Social Care in a variety of settings, including Charities, Local Authority Children Centres and more recently schools. I have experience of multi-agency working to provide child and family support and targeted interventions, from parenting courses and outreach work to 1-1 and small group interventions with children. I enjoy work with a focus on social and emotional wellbeing and resilience and have a keen interest in children actively participating in their decision-making processes. I have a degree in Social Work, NCFE Certificate in Counselling skills and various practice related training more recently Lego Therapy and an update on Attachment Theory.

Senior ESO for Children in Care living Out of Kent

Amanda Lihou BEd (Hons)

I have been with VSK for more than two years as an Education Support Officer. I support both staff and children in Primary and Secondary schools for enablement through Educational needs, Transitional support, Emotional and self-esteem mentoring. With more than ten years of education experience in Key Stage 1 and 2, specialising in Early Years, I enjoy working with young people facing diverse challenges and I continue to study further in this field and promoting best practise.

