

Education Support Officers

South Kent

Sam Pilcher HLTA and NVQ Level 4 - Ashford and Hythe



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.

Jo Rees Ba (Hons) - Folkestone

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 - Sandwich and Deal



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.

Emma Wills Ba (Hons) and GTP - Dover and Folkestone

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.



Steve Green Ba (Hons) and PGCE – UASC



I 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.

East Kent

John Ollason BSc. MEd. and PGCE - Thanet and Canterbury

I was a teacher both in mainstream and special school settings for 30 years, specialising in Science and Maths, and also doing work in Music and Social Studies along the way. My work was mainly with secondary age young people who had Social, Emotional and Educational difficulties. I achieved a course in Counselling with Educational Settings while carrying out this work. Additionally I was a foster carer for KCC for more than 20 years, fostering young people between the ages of 5 and 18 years. I joined VSK as Support Officer in July 2013, working across Thanet and Canterbury areas, and have supported young people across the age range from 5 to 16 both in school and home settings, doing everything from basic literacy and numeracy to Higher Level GCSE Maths and Science, as well as behaviour mentoring.

Lucy Southwood BSc (Hons) and PGCE - Thanet



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.

Amy Barnes Ba (Hons) and PGCE - Thanet



I have always been interested in working within the education sector as working with young people is both rewarding and inspiring. Before joining VSK, I taught Secondary English for two years in Thanet schools was a Learning Mentor for the John Wallis Academy in Ashford and worked as a Pastoral and Clerical Assistant at my former secondary school. I have a keen interest in voluntary work and have volunteered at The Watts Gallery in Guildford, The Powell-Cotton Museum at Quex Park, Warwick Folk Festival and the Broadstairs Folk Week. I am very excited to be a part of VSK and to be using my expertise as well as developing my skills and knowledge.

Lynn Griffiths HLTA – Swale

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.

Maria Bishop Ba (Hons) – Canterbury

Debbie Briant HNC Computing, HND Computer Support and HLTA - Swale



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.

Keira Kinsella Ba (Hons) – Thanet

I have been working for VSK since January 2014. My experience predominantly lies in working with disaffected children who have moderate to severe behavioural and learning difficulties. Whilst studying PE and Sport Science at university, I taught PE, DT, PSHE and Art as an unqualified teacher at a KS3 PRU. I have undergone training in Attachment Theory, ASD, Mental Health First Aid for Young People and Lego Training Therapy whilst working within the education system.

Vacancy – Swale

Vacancy - Thanet

North and West Kent

Amanda Ormond - Dartford, Swanley, Gravesham and Sevenoaks



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.

Lisa Thistlethwaite NVQ Level 2 and BDA Level 3- Dartford, Swanley, Gravesham and Sevenoaks



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

Amanda Lihou Bed. (Hons) - Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells