

# 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.

### 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.

### 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.



### 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.

## East Kent

### Steve Green BA (Hons) and PGCE

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.



### John Ollason BSc MEd. and PGCE



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

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.



### Maria Bishop BA (Hons)



Before going to University I was heavily involved in the care of Learning disabled Adults and children, I was the vice chairperson for a charity called Luton Mencap. After achieving a Criminology Degree I started my career working within the criminal justice system, where I worked in a variety of settings. In 2005 I joined one of the first created Academy school's in Bedfordshire providing education for pupils aged 3 to 13. I worked there for seven years as the SENCo and Designated Teacher for Children in Care alongside teaching year 6 pupils. When I moved to Kent I joined VSK, where I have provided direct education to pupils aged 5 to 16 years. I have also achieved a diploma in Creative Therapy which covers the areas of Play, Music, Art and Movement therapy. In my personal life, I am a Governor at a primary school in Thanet and I am the chair person for a Sea Scout Group in Thanet.

### **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.



### **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.

### **Keira Kinsella Ba (Hons)**

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.



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



I have worked for 11 years within a 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.



### **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.

## North and West Kent

### Lisa Thistlethwaite NVQ Level 2 and BDA Level 3



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

### 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.



### 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.

### 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.

