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Inclusivity for all.

I am writing to you today to share some information about how we support children with their learning here at Albrighton Primary School & Nursery, including those who have additional needs who may or may not have a formal diagnosis.

As a school, we exist to provide a structured environment where your child can receive a high-quality education. Here at Albrighton, we believe your child's personal development, social and emotional well-being are all equally as important as achieving academically, which is why we strive to make our school as inclusive and nurturing as possible. We are passionate about enabling each and every child to reach their full potential, with our core belief **'it doesn't matter what your starting point is, it's where you finish that counts'** going hand in hand with our motto **'only our best will do!'**

Recent research shows as many as 1 in 5 of us can be considered neurodiverse, which includes conditions such as Autism and ADHD, with only a third of that number having a formal diagnosis. Part of our duty in school is to identify children with additional needs and make reasonable adjustments to support them in securing their best possible outcomes. We do this for all children, whether they have a specific diagnosis or not.

We work closely with other professionals from external agencies to seek advice on supporting children with a wide range of barriers that prevent them from accessing their education, such as: speech and language, neurodiversity, SEMH, dyslexia/dyscalculia, memory, processing, behavioural and much more. We use this advice to tailor the support we give both to individual children and to continually develop our whole-school approaches so all children benefit.

Our staff receive an ongoing programme of training on different special educational needs, focussing on raising awareness of different conditions and supporting children to overcome the challenges they have in accessing their education. In the last year we have had training on: positive behaviour strategies, zones of regulation, de-escalation and regulation, anxiety, processing and working memory, tourette syndrome, autism, language and communication, learning environments and much more. We continue to make specific adaptions to meet the needs of individuals, but where possible use this training and advice to make changes across the whole-school that benefit everyone. This approach makes our school more accessible and inclusive, removing potential barriers for all children regardless of any diagnosis they do or do not have.

We have recently had the opportunity to be part of Shropshire's Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) project. Working closely with Miriam Bristoll (Specialist Advisory Teacher) and Rachel



Tomkinson (Neurodiversity Practitioner), we have refined our whole-school approaches to; communication, displays, visual aids, the Zones of Regulation, calming environments, emotional well-being and more. We have used this project as an opportunity to train all staff at all levels across the school, to ensure we have consistency from everyone. The outcomes of this will be shared in more detail with you separately, but in essence we have made changes that make our school more accessible to everyone, especially those with neurodiverse traits.

A growing number of children are presenting with some form of anxiety over attending school. Organisations, including the NHS and YoungMinds, remind us that it is normal for children to feel worried about attending school at different points in their life. This research also acknowledges rising levels of separation anxiety since the COVID pandemic, and even more anxiety being driven by the pressures of social media and the unsupported use of the online world. Additionally, hormonal changes are synonymous with increasing levels of anxiety and behavioural challenges as children progress through primary school and begin to explore the boundaries between the formal structure at school and relaxation in their 'safe spaces' at home. Emotional well-being and nurture are very important to us here at Albrighton Primary, where we believe the well-being of children (and staff) is crucial to fostering a positive environment for learning. Mrs Chambers leads a pastoral team to help support all our children with their emotional well-being. They are supported to develop confidence and overcome these Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs through a variety of approaches including nurture, friendship and well-being groups, as well as group and individual support where needed. In addition, we have our OPAL offering at lunchtime, which encourages and motivates children to access a wide range of different types of structured play, as well as a daily forest nurture group led by Mrs Pearson-Brand.

We have noticed an increasing trend amongst our parents turning to school seeking a medical diagnosis for their child, so I wanted to clarify our role in this - schools cannot diagnose children, this can only be done by doctors and medical professionals. We can, of course, support you with referrals and most importantly work with you to make sure we get the provision right to enable your child to thrive at school. In truth, if we do our job well, a formal medical diagnosis should have little to no effect on the support your child will already be receiving in school.

I will continue to write to you each week as part of the school's newsletter, where I will explain SEND issues and give you more details about how we support children with their learning here at Albrighton Primary School & Nursery.

If you have anything you want to raise, ask or discuss please call the office to make an appointment or email me – SENDCO@albrightonprimary.com

Kindest Regards,

Darren Green

Deputy Headteacher and SENDCo.

