

Welcome!

Welcome to the autumn edition of 'Inspire', offering an overview of recent developments and upcoming events in OLASS Learning Support.

The thought of an Ofsted inspection may fill some people with dread, but have you considered the possibility that an Ofsted inspection can be 'empowering' and have a positive impact on your way of working? Read about the recent experiences of Ofsted inspections from ALS staff at HMP/YOI Winchester and HMP Foston Hall.

Learning Support features significantly in the new Ofsted inspection framework and Dame Sally Coates' review of prison education, which both acknowledge the vital role learning support plays in a learner's journey. The emphasis on promoting independence in learners is greater than ever.

We would like to hear about the strategies and methods you use to enable learners to work independently and the impact this has on learners.

In the meantime, read on to find out about:

- The experience of ALS staff during Ofsted inspections
- The role of the regional SENCo
- ALS Development Days and networking opportunities for ALS staff
- ALS paperwork and the learning support guide

We have a number of new ALSPs who have started over the last few months and we would like to extend a very warm welcome to you. (See below about networking opportunities for ALS staff.)



ALS Profile: Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) for South Central: Lorraine Cesar

My role:

I started working for Milton Keynes College in June 2016. My role is to provide support, training and guidance on additional learning support needs. I carry out regular site visits to support ALSPs, managers and co-ordinators in all aspects of learning support. I also provide training within a particular establishment to meet a specific need, or at a regional level to meet more generalised need. I can also support with access arrangements in examinations and with learning walks and observations to develop the quality of ALS provision.

Background:

I have a background in teaching English as a foreign language and leading community outreach projects in the Adult Education service, before moving in to Primary Education and working as a School Inclusion Leader.

Staff in the West Midlands will already be familiar with Sarah Leigh, their regional SENCo. Staff in the East Midlands can look forward to meeting Samantha Bold, the newly appointed SENCo for the region.

ALS Development Days & Networking for ALSPs

As well as ALS Development Days to be held regionally throughout the year, there will be a national event for all three regions in the spring. These events will include sessions on supporting learners with a range of learning difficulties and disabilities, including ADHD and mental health.

They will also provide a great opportunity for networking and sharing good practice. As well as these opportunities, if you are new to the College, have a question about learning support, or you would just like to talk to, or meet other ALSPs, you can also use the ALS contact details recently circulated to contact other ALS staff. If there is anything in particular you would like to find out about, have something to share, or have recommendations or requests for training, then please let us know or contact your regional SENCo.

As well as training for ALS Practitioners, we are putting together a training package to raise awareness of ALS with teaching staff.

Please email us at
OLASSALS@mkcollege.ac.uk

Please also continue to send us your stories about supporting learners, your ideas and innovations and learning support activities you are involved in.

ALS Paperwork - it's not just about completing forms...

By now you will be using the updated ALS paperwork issued in August. It has been designed to help to continue to meet learners' needs and ensure that our evidence meets funding requirements. If you have any questions about completing ALS paperwork please contact the central ALS team or your regional SENCo. You may also find the answer in the '*Learning Support Guidance for Staff*' document which has been updated and re-circulated recently. It is relevant to all education staff so please spread the word as it provides information on the roles and responsibilities of ALSPs, tutors and managers and includes useful information on a range of learning difficulties and disabilities and valuable tips for supporting learners (*these are also available as printable sheets - see staff intranet or email the OLASS Central Team for copies*).

Who's Who in ALS

**CENTRAL TEAM:
ALS CO-ORDINATORS**
Aimee Hawkes & Lisa Thomas

REGIONAL LEADS:
South Central - Mark Fisher HoC
East Midlands - Alison Stewart HoC
West Midlands - Gail Lomas HoC

REGIONAL SENCO:
South Central - Lorraine Cesar
East Midlands - Sam Bold
West Midlands - Sarah Leigh

Continued

What role does an ALSP play in an Ofsted inspection?

Whilst there is a common framework for Ofsted inspections, every inspection is individual and the ALSP's experience will differ. What we do know is that the learner is at the centre of everything we do and an inspector will want to see how we support learners to achieve and become independent learners. Here are accounts from ALS staff at HMP/YOI Winchester and HMP Foston Hall about their experience of an Ofsted inspection.

Prison: HMP/YOI Winchester

ALS Practitioners - Jennifer Hogan & Alana Sketcher
ALS Co-ordinator - Deborah Cutler

Our Ofsted inspection was in July of this year. The Ofsted Inspector held a separate meeting with the ALS Team to look at the ALS provision and its impact on learners. She was very knowledgeable about Learning Support and the part it plays in a learner's journey.

In particular, she was interested in how learners from a travelling background were supported with their needs and in their understanding of how meaningful and relevant education is in their lives. We were able to show her three learning support portfolios for travellers that were recent learners. One of these learners, who could not write his name when he came in to Education, had gained three Entry Stepping Stones, Entry 2 English and maths Functional Skills over the period of a year, as well as qualifications in Personal Development and Preparing for Work. More than this though, he had become a confident member of the classroom because of the ALS support he had regularly received.

The inspector wanted to know how we collected learner feedback. She was shown our display board in the main Education corridor and the feedback sheets from exit interviews.

She also wanted to know how many times a learner was seen each week, how independently learners worked with their ALS Practitioner, how the progression of learners was recorded and tracked, learner outcomes, and the partnership the ALS team has with colleagues and other departments in the prison, such as the Mental Health Team and the Library.

She also asked us about ourselves, our backgrounds, the level of our own education and our experience within differing learning support environments.

Deborah Cutler, *ALS Co-ordinator, HMP Winchester*

Prison: HMP Foston Hall

ALS Practitioner: Sam Cave

The Friday before the inspection, I talked to all of our tutors to organise support for the following week and wrote up the timetable for all mentors on a whiteboard so they knew who, and where, they would be supporting throughout the week.

When the Ofsted inspectors started observing on Monday afternoon, I was in a maths class supporting three learners who all had behavioural issues. I showed one of the inspectors the completed ALS paperwork, including the Course Specific Plan. We discussed learners' SMART targets, the time-frame for each target, and how they are reviewed and ticked and dated when completed. We also looked at Session Plans and how these are reviewed. I attended a one-to-one meeting where the inspector asked me a series of questions about how we target our support, and how we help to make learners more independent, which he also asked me to demonstrate. We produced a timeline that showed the skills that the learners can do independently and their progression to independence.

Ofsted highlighted the areas that I do well, and also what I need to work on in the future. I found this empowering; it has given direction to my work and highlighted what I need to be working on in the year ahead.

Sam Cave, *ALS Practitioner, HMP Foston Hall*



Areas of Focus from recent Ofsted inspections

Whilst this list isn't exhaustive, and there will always be additional areas of learning support an inspector will be interested in, it does include some useful points about what an inspector might look for:

- How and where ALS fits into the learner's journey and its impact on learners
- How ALS leads learners to independence
- Use of peer mentors to support learners and how well learners support each other (as well as their own learning plans and goals)
- The direction and support ALSPs receive from teachers to drive learners' progress and ensure lesson objectives are achieved
- How ALS learners achieve compared to their peers
- How progression of learners is recorded and tracked
- Learner outcomes
- Learner feedback
- Partnership working

If you have any questions, would like to add anything to the list, or share something from your own Ofsted experience, please contact us.

Latest News

- We would like to welcome Sam Bold to the Learning Support Team in her role as East Midlands Regional SENCo.

- Please continue to send trackers and ALS queries to the Central Learning Support email address: olassals@mkcollege.ac.uk by the 4th of every month.

Next newsletter... promoting independence in learners, profile of Sam Bold and the role of the tutor in supporting learners.

If there is anything you would like to share in the winter newsletter, please email OLASSALS@mkcollege.ac.uk by 30 November 2016.

Have a great autumn!!