



Specialist Leader of Education



Name:	Helen McShane
School:	Countess Wear Community Primary School
Position	SENCO
Phase:	Primary
Specialism:	SEND

About Helen

I have a first class honours degree in Special Educational Needs (SEN) and have gained the National SENCO award. I have worked with children with SEN throughout my teaching career, in both mainstream and specialist settings.

I am currently the SENCO, member of the Senior Leadership Team and safeguarding lead at Countess Wear Community School in Exeter. Countess Wear is a high achieving, inclusive school on the outskirts of Exeter. We have a Nurture group, Hearing Support Centre, Forest school and Nursery provision. The outcomes for all children, whatever their ability level, is above national averages.

As a Specialist Leader for Education (SLE), I have delivered training across Devon on the New Code of Practice and the Graduated Response to SEN. I also regularly present to the SENCO award training course and to the University of Exeter Master's degree in Special Education course.

I have been involved in developing the new Devon Graduated Response tool to help SENCOs to respond to the individual levels of SEN in their schools. I am part of the SLE team developing a new webpage on the Exeter Teaching School Alliance website to share good SEN practice and information across the schools. I am a founder member of the steering group for the Exeter Primary Support Partnership which supports schools to include children with the most challenging behaviours. The partnership organises regular conferences, peer support sessions and commissions a wide variety of training.

The role of the SLE

SLEs are outstanding middle and senior leaders and have a successful track record of school improvement. SLEs support leaders in other schools. They have excellent



interpersonal skills, are able to work sensitively and collaboratively with others and have a commitment to outreach work. They understand what outstanding leadership practice in their area of specialism looks like and can help other leaders to achieve it in their own context. The SLE role is about developing other middle and senior leaders so that they have the skills to lead their own teams and improve practice in their own schools. This may be done through one-to-one peer coaching or facilitated group support and could involve a variety of activities, such as data analysis, coaching or joint action planning.

For more information or to get into contact with an SLE please call: 01392 927171