Our LCFE Journey…

We are delighted to announce that Hospital Education Service is now - **officially** - a language and communication friendly establishment!

The LCFE validation process has been hugely beneficial to HES. Our LCFE journey began back in August 2019. From the start, we worked closely with our mentor, Liz O’Connell (SALT Team Leader), to ensure that we offered pupils a learning environment that was rich in visual cues and symbols with consistency throughout the school. We wanted to evidence how pupils benefitted from worthwhile learning and social experiences with calm areas for all learners; how they were empowered to make positive, informed choices to aid problem-solving; how they developed effective collaborative skills and benefitted from leadership opportunities; and how we provided opportunities for them to actively develop language and communication skills in 1:1 and group settings.

HES requires a highly motivated, enthusiastic staff to continually seek out and experiment with a range of supportive learning strategies (particularly multisensory). Each teacher is adept at managing learners with a range of complex physical and psychiatric conditions and we already employ numerous strategies to aid language and communication. What we perhaps hadn’t been doing so effectively was evaluating the impact of these strategies at individual and whole school level. As a result, we weren’t ensuring that we were as language and communication friendly as we knew we could be.

HES now reflects more explicitly on **how** and **why** we tailor aspects of language and communication to suit the unique needs of each pupil in front of us and we are always able to justify our decision-making. The LCFE indicators have enabled us to self-evaluate as individuals and as a team, thus ensuring that the pupil remains at the centre of lesson-planning and is the key beneficiary of our improved LCFE practice.

Perhaps most significantly, we steadily evolve as collegiate workers. We regularly evaluate how profitably we apply LCFE Talk Strategies to engage, support and challenge our learners in complex, unpredictable circumstances. We are doing this with a new vigour!

HES staff unanimously agree that we have benefitted from - and enjoyed - our successful journey towards LCFE validation. We are certain that all stakeholders will benefit greatly from our improved practice.

Jim McElhone.