

Calling all GRADUATES

Axcis is seeking talented graduates for our 2015 Graduate Trainee Recruitment Consultant jobs in London, Liverpool, Bristol, Midlands and South Wales. For more information see <http://blog.axcis.co.uk/2015/03/graduate-consultant-jobs-with-axcis-for-summer-2015/>

Embedding the SEND Reforms



For those of us who have been frustrated by successive governments' inability to consider the needs of children and young people who may be less academically able than their peers, or who have other barriers to their learning to overcome, the overhaul of the SEND Framework has meant that special needs has emerged from the shadows and had its time in the sun. The reforms that began to be debated in 2010, and resulted in Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, are likely to continue to attract attention until they are fully in place in 2018. It may not have been ideal to bring in these changes at a time when so much else is changing in schools and when finances are particularly tight, but if we waited for a more opportune moment, it might never arrive.

Although the main differences between the previous system and the new one are well rehearsed by now, there are still some areas of confusion. Firstly, the new Code of Practice, on which early years providers, schools and post-16 provisions rely to interpret the Act for them, has had a convoluted history. This is the first time we have had an SEND Code, rather than an SEN

Code, but for the last few months, we have had to juggle three editions:

- The SEN Code of Practice 2001, which will remain as a source of information on statements until they have all been replaced by Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans);
- The July 2014 SEND Code of Practice which was in place between September 2014 and March 2015; and
- The SEND Code of Practice which was published in January 2015 and came into force on 1st April this year.

There is not much difference between the two SEND Codes, but the version that is now in place has additional information in chapter 10 about young people in youth custody who may also have SEN.

Some confusion remains about the relationship between a school's SEN Policy, the SEN Information Report and the school's contribution to the local authority's Local Offer. The legal requirement is for schools and other settings to have on their website their SEN Information Report, with the answers to the 13 points itemised in the Code of Practice. In the same way that the Local Offer sets out what the LA expects its local schools to provide, the SEN Information Report sets out in greater detail the provision each individual school makes for pupils with SEN.

The Code gives greater prominence to the needs of pupils with medical conditions and this includes both physical and mental health needs. Of the four broad categories of need from the 2001 SEN Code of Practice, only one has been changed. First of all Behavioural, emotional and social development (BESD) was going to become Social, mental and emotional difficulties (SMEH), but this was changed in the later versions to Social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH). The notion of looking beneath the way a child behaves in order to explore why he or she

is behaving in a certain way, is a step forward. If we have an idea of the cause of their behaviour, it is easier to provide the type of support that may ameliorate that behaviour and make it easier for them to learn - and also those around them!

To help schools, settings and services get to grips with dealing with a wide range of medical needs, including mental health issues, the Spring term ended in a flurry of publications. The DfE updated its advice on Mental health and behaviour in schools and also issued Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future - Departmental advice for school leaders & counsellors. The Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Taskforce, which was established last September, published Future in mind: Promoting, protecting & improving children & young people's mental health & wellbeing (DoH / NHS England). Alongside this, the PSHE Association published Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing. These documents all appeared at the end of March in time for Easter holiday reading!

Whatever happens at the general election, it is encouraging to know that there is a large measure of agreement between the main political parties that the changes being introduced are the right way forward for children, young people and their families, as it places them at the centre of being involved in the decisions that affect them. NAHT is very grateful for the support Axcis provided for its hugely successful and dynamic Special schools, specialist and alternative provision conference, which demonstrated that, despite all the changes hitting schools, school leaders are determined to be at the forefront of improving outcomes for all their pupils, not least those for whom learning can present particular challenges.

Dr Rona Tutt OBE
Former head teacher and Past President of the NAHT



Social, Emotional and Mental Health: SEMH - the new acronym

SSAT has been invited to write an article for Axcis' termly publication, available to those schools who commission their recruitment services and the SEN teaching and support staff they place in schools.

SSAT | inquire
inspire
innovate
impact

There's a growing momentum around Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. The introduction of this broad area of need into the 2014 SEND Code of Practice prompted a mixed response, but if it serves as a lever to increase the focus of decision-makers, then it's a welcome impact.

The political interest is opportune, as it reflects a continuing professional concern even though emotional well-being may have seemed to drop into the shadows of our educational landscape whilst policy development has been concentrating on assessment, curriculum, school performance and accountability, school status, safeguarding, etc.

Professional frustration at the challenges of meeting the higher levels of well-being and mental health needs is clearly picked up by the national Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Taskforce, established in September 2014. Their report [Future in mind](#) highlights the regional inequalities in specialist mental health provision and makes ten key recommendations, mindful of the forthcoming general election.

However, mental health issues remain a medical diagnosis - the revised SEND Code reminds us that schools clearly are part of the 'Tier 1' response along the continuum of well-being. The SEND Code requires schools to consider any causal factors that may lead to a pupil apparently presenting with special educational needs. There's a clear emphasis on understanding the nature of individual need in order to work out what action the school needs to take, not to fit a pupil into a category. And so, some of the anxieties about the introduction of the SEMH area of need might be alleviated by the fact that successful schools have long been working systematically on the development of non-cognitive skills and on emotional and mental well-being as part of their universal provision for all pupils.

These effective schools have recognised the impact of resilience and well-being on attainment outcomes. They are witness to the increasing pressures of 21st century living and their responsibility to support young people with managing the stress and pace of our world today. Even where a significant proportion of pupils are disadvantaged, schools work determinedly to address such socio-economic factors as generational unemployment, which can adversely affect their students' well-being and attitudes to learning.

Ofsted has highlighted the quality of general provision that meets a wider range of needs (rather than always increasing additional provision) as being symptomatic of best practice, stating that lessons should be planned to address potential areas of difficulty and to remove barriers to pupil achievement. Schools doing this have

developed, and invest in maintaining, an ethos which pro-actively develops self-awareness, scaffolds strategies for self-regulation and provides opportunities to practise social skills. This commitment to personal development is reflected in the curriculum, environment and systems across the whole community and at every level.

Recent examples shared by SENCos in SSAT's national Schools Network include:

- the weekly custom of time limited exchanges of 'what works well' to be shared as an agenda item within phase or departmental meetings - reflecting their school's solution-based approach and the leadership's realisation that staff need to be resourced with practical ideas in order to remain solution-focused
- supporting every teacher with printed information of teaching strategies linked to the commonly occurring special educational needs identified through SENCo analysis of their pupil population
- providing simple profiles of pupils who may be identified / present with a special educational need and the strategies which the pupil and staff regard as being supportive
- identifying the most frequently occurring types of special educational need to drive professional development programmes and inform performance management
- externally commissioning a staff development session on communication by a qualified speech and language therapist, followed by a whole staff activity of drawing up a framework specifying the characteristics of a communication-friendly learning environment
- staff and governors collaborating to agree expectations of whole school and class climate, and suggesting practical ways of supporting the climate by revising / strengthening systems.

Such strategies as these, designed to enhance the quality of Wave 1 provision, have maximum impact where they are consistently implemented. They reflect the outline of school funding by Lorraine Peterson in the previous Axcis edition, which relies on the judicious allocation of Elements 1 and 2 to meet the majority of need for the majority of pupils. [The recent National Children's Bureau guidance Best practice framework to help schools to promote social and emotional well-being and recognise the early onset of mental health issues affecting young people](#) offers a well-researched and accessible framework. Similarly, SSAT's [Mind the Gap](#) publication puts forward ideas and case studies in collected essays from teachers and

NEWSINBRIEF

NAS Professional Conference 2015 - Axcis were again very

proud to be key sponsors of this event. There was a special appearance from the Countess of Wessex who is patron for the NAS. She came and spoke to us on the Axcis stand about the lack of SEND training included on Initial Teacher Training courses. More about this coming soon!



academics to inform or enhance pupil well-being.

In the words of the national Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Taskforce, 'there is no time to waste', but as the political wheels turn and we wait for a response to the forceful evidence of the case for change, schools continue their endeavours to embed and enhance their provision for well-being and mental health.

LINKS

Future in mind

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-mental-health-services-for-young-people>

SSAT Mind the Gap

<http://www.ssatuk.co.uk/mind-the-gap/>

National Children's Bureau guidance (via Young Minds web page as the direct link seems not to be working)

<http://www.youngminds.org.uk/news/blog/2522-national-childrens-bureau-social-and-emotional-well-being-framework>

Jessica Nash

Head of Special Schools Network and SEN
SSAT, the Schools, Students and Teachers
Network

Autism Awareness Week

As proud sponsors of the National Autistic Society, and specialist recruiters for the special educational needs sector, we wouldn't be doing our bit if we didn't get involved in World Autism Awareness Week. So, what has been going on over here at Axcis?

At Axcis, we have had a brilliant week supporting autism awareness. On the more serious side of things, we've published some useful resources for professionals in the classroom, such as [10 Tips for an Autism Friendly Classroom](#) and [3 Ideas for Managing Difficult ASD Behaviours](#).

We have also been running a competition (now closed) to win a signed copy of [Robyn Steward's book](#) - The Independent Woman's Handbook for Super Safe Living on the Autistic Spectrum.



Robyn at a book signing with Axcis

Oh - and that's not all - we were also pleased to hear from Jonathan Hanna about his fantastic new business venture to raise awareness of autism in Wales with his new business InAWE - read about it on the Axcis blog.



At the InAWE Launch

Our offices across the country had a fun time supporting Onesie Wednesday - we had some outstanding outfits!



Axcis London had some fantastic outfits for Onesie Weds



Axcis Liverpool managed to join in despite most of their team being away! We Loved their stand-in bears!



Working from home? We still wanted to join in! It's me and my son Cooper with his bear!



A lovely team shot from the Axcis Midlands office!

Then on Thursday 2nd April, some of our London staff were out at Piccadilly Tube Station collecting for the NAS. What amazing support! We couldn't be more proud of our staff and the efforts they have put in to promoting such a worthwhile cause.



Stephen, Martin, Helena and Patrick, out collecting for the NAS in their Onesies!

LINKS

10 Tips for an Autism Friendly Classroom

<http://blog.axcis.co.uk/2015/03/10-tips-for-an-autism-friendly-classroom/>

3 Ideas for Managing Difficult ASD Behaviours

<http://blog.axcis.co.uk/2015/03/5-tips-managing-difficult-asd-behaviours/>

Robyn Steward's Book

<http://blog.axcis.co.uk/2015/03/win-a-signed-copy-of-robyn-stewards-book/>

InAWE Business Launch

<http://blog.axcis.co.uk/2015/03/jonathan-hanna/>

Emily Marbaix

Axcis Media Co-ordinator

Diary of Events - Summer Term

nasen Effective School Leadership Conference
Macron Stadium, Bolton
19th May 2015

Axcis is pleased to headline sponsor this conference which aims to provide positive answers to key questions regarding the CoP and offer support for meeting the challenge of change which SEND reform brings to school leaders. We encourage all senior leaders to attend and look forward to meeting you there.

Nasen Live 2015
Macron Stadium, Bolton
20th & 21st May 2015

This popular annual conference is the premier SEND event of the year in the north of England and Axcis is proud to sponsor it for the third consecutive year. It is designed for anyone working in the field of SEND and you can expect a wide variety of free resources, training, advice and support. This event is not to be missed! We look forward to meeting you at the Axcis exhibition stand on both days.

Axcis Bristol Behaviour Management Seminar
Knowle DGE
17:30pm – 19:30pm

This twilight training by positive behaviour management specialist, Tom Pyne aims to help registered Axcis candidates get a better understanding of how to manage behaviour positively in classroom settings. Tom is a highly distinguished trainer so this one is not to be missed. Register with Axcis Bristol if you need SEND work in south east England areas so that you can benefit from this type of CPD training at very minimal charge rates.

SSAT Special Education Annual Conference
NCTL, Nottingham
1st & 2nd July 2015

Under the theme 'Shifting from Aspiration into Learner Achievement' this conference will focus on building confidence in planning and delivering specialised learning opportunities (through skills and knowledge sharing in workshops) and exploring ways to evidence the progress made.

SENCO Conference
Manchester Metropolitan University
9th July 2015

Axcis will be exhibiting at the Annual SENCo Conference in Manchester. The theme of this year's conference is "Transforming the role of the SENCo" and offers an array of expert speakers. We look forward to seeing you there.

Further information can be found in our website diary: <http://blog.axcis.co.uk/events/>. We also post regular event updates and the latest news to our Axcis SEND Community online via our blog: <http://blog.axcis.co.uk/> - LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/axcis-education - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AxcisEducationRecruitment> - Twitter: @Axcis & @AxcisJobs - YouTube: www.axcis.co.uk/youtube (axcisvideos)