



Information about our schools

ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT US:

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Learn to Live Federation Vision

Everyone will be the best that they can be

Everyone has a voice

No-one is excluded

Welcome



Dear Parents & Carers,



On behalf of our learners, staff and our school community, I would like to welcome you to the Learn to Live Federation. The Federation consists of two special schools – Bidwell Brook School based in Dartington and Ellen Tinkham School based in Exeter. Ellen Tinkham School is split over two sites – Primary aged pupils are educated at Hollow Lane and Secondary aged students at Wayside Crescent.

All our learners are aged 3-19 years and have an EHCP (Education, Health & Care Plan).



Our students have complex special needs across the educational, physical, emotional and social spectrum of abilities. Each learner has a valued voice and is keenly represented on our Student Councils. Advocacy Leads ensure students are involved in all key decision making across the Federation and their input is invaluable. Their views, thoughts and ideas make a tangible difference for improving their life at school and for their future. The Learn to Live Federation also has student representation on “Champions for Change” which is a Devon-wide initiative involving students from across all education sectors.



Welcome

We are very proud of our schools and constantly strive towards providing a stimulating and challenging environment for all our learners to “be the best that they can be”. Our approach is very clear – the voice of each pupil and their family is key. Learn to Live supports this ethos and provides opportunities for families and professionals to engage and provide meaningful outcomes for our students.

Working as a member of staff in our successful Federation, we have the highest expectations for safeguarding, health & safety standards. Our learners deserve excellent, caring staff who will work hard within their team to empower all across the Federation.

Ellen Tinkham School has been Ofsted rated “Good” in our inspection in April 2023. Bidwell Brook School has been rated consistently “Good” since at least 2004. Our ambition is for both schools to be “Outstanding” and to continue to provide an education that supports our children, young people and adults to develop the skills and aspirations for a life that is fulfilled.

Welcome



The Learn to Live Federation is part of the SENTient Trust, a co-operative trust of 10 special maintained schools across the Local Authority. Ellen Tinkham is also a Teaching School and a National Support School, and is a strategic partner of SWIFT in the South West.

I hope this presentation and our website provides you with a good overview of our schools and the Learn to Live Federation.

We look forward to welcoming you to one of our schools in the near future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N Burroughs".

Nikki Burroughs – Executive Head

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Finnemore".

Steve Finnemore – Chair of Governors







About Us





Bidwell Brook School and Ellen Tinkham School are Local Authority maintained Foundation Special Schools located in Devon. Both have separate DfE numbers.

In 2014, the two schools joined to form the Learn to Live Federation.

Bidwell Brook is located in Dartington, is Ofsted rated “Good” and educates around 160 pupils. Ellen Tinkham is based in Exeter, is also Ofsted rated “Good” and educates 240 pupils across two sites. The primary phase is based at Hollow Lane (EX1 3RW) and the secondary phase is at Wayside Crescent (EX1 3LF).

Our pupils across the Federation are aged 3-19 years and all have an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP).

High quality, stimulating and challenging provision ensures our learners can “be the best that they can be”.

The right to have a voice that is listened to, heard and understood is central to our ethos and defines our partnership working with families, children and young people. Respectful working, the right to be heard and included is also the expectation for our staff and colleagues from other agencies.

EVERYONE WILL BE THE BEST THAT THEY CAN BE

EVERYONE HAS A VOICE

NO-ONE IS EXCLUDED

We are committed to putting our learners at the heart of everything we do, through our holistic approach to education.

- Mutual respect is non-negotiable;
- The learner voice is heard, valued and responded to;
- We are led by a person-centred approach;
- We give full value to all transitions;
- We foster positive, transparent and open relationships with families, carers, external agencies and providers.





Teaching & Learning



- Learners are taught in inclusive classrooms;
- Learning environments are adapted according to each class group;
- We aim for every child to be fully engaged with their learning.

The schools have been implementing a “continuous provision” approach across all key stages, where learners have access throughout their day to many practical learning opportunities and resources to support them with their learning. Our “continuous provision” approach enables learners to explore recent learning, practice new skills and follow their own interests, therefore leading their own learning.

The purpose of an effective “continuous provision” is to offer learners a constant environment that is safe for them to explore whilst challenging their learning. It should allow learners the freedom to explore and become independent in making choices and to support them in becoming active learners.

- Observing learners is a crucial part of the class team’s role;
- Observations have an impact on what is planned for children’s next steps;
- Class teams can then identify the strengths and needs of our learners, their behaviour, interests and patterns of learning and development;
- This ensures all learners continue to make progress.

E-Teams

Across the Federation, our key staff are members of E-Teams, each one fulfilling a specific role:

Empowerment Team = A team of core subject leaders focusing on having targeted discussions about individual learner progress which is growing their knowledge and understanding of the learners across the school. They are a democratic body whose discussions with teachers are well-informed and their action planning demonstrates capacity for improvement.

Enable Team = Has an equitable 'access to learning' focus and includes leaders for visual impairment, sensory learning, learner premium eligibility, speech & language therapy, behaviour support and advocacy.

Enrichment Team = Includes creative and expressive arts as well as having a cultural and spiritual focus. This team organise enrichment days and opportunities across the year and ensure a positive, respectful culture, demonstrating and supporting British Values, through engaging learning.

Energise Team = Focuses on physical, outdoor and active learning, covering all aspects of sport and PE as well as practical outdoor learning provided by the highly skilled rural skills team and overseeing residential opportunities provided across the year.





All children are unique and valued. We acknowledge that all students learn in different ways and that all learners have the right to be taught in a way that maximises their learning potential. We work closely with students, their families and other professionals to provide a holistic approach to learning.

National Curriculum

All of our students are disapplied from national tests, but do receive the full range of National Curriculum subjects and content. The schools ensure all lessons are appropriate for our learners. The most important aspect of this is ensuring that all pupils can communicate; that they each have their right to be listened to, to make choices, and to be respected and supported.

“The curriculum is very well matched to each student and is seamlessly integrated with the care needs, support and clear targets from person-centred planning processes”. OFSTED



Rural Skills and Outdoor Education



Rural Skills and Outdoor Education

Many of our learners find traditional classroom environments particularly challenging. By tapping into the wealth of opportunities that can be found in nature, we offer them the chance to benefit from a far greater breadth of learning experience and enrichment.

Interacting with and caring for animals, growing flowers and vegetables, and working with their hands on innumerable different projects means that we can anticipate a wide variety of outcomes such as:

- Engagement with the outside world;
- Showing an interest in the world in which they live;
- Learning about the needs of living things;
- Understanding that the owner has a responsibility to meet the needs of domesticated animals so they remain healthy and happy;
- Showing care and concern for living things and the environment;
- Links with the science curriculum (especially biology).



Rural Skills and Outdoor Education

We offer a wide range of residential experiences/trips for our learners from Key Stage 3 upwards. For many of our learners, these trips will be the first time away from home and can be a scary thought for them and their families. But with a highly experienced and dedicated staff team, the trips are greatly received by all.

The learners have fantastic, positive experiences and ask to go again! Previous trips have included:

- Exmoor Bunkhouse, working alongside the National Trust;
- Freshwater Holiday Park in Dorset, with other groups of people from around the country with additional needs;
- Paris and South Africa, offering cultural experiences;
- Winter sports including ski-ing and sledging in France;
- Holton Lee, in Poole, Dorset which offers purpose built barn accommodation with great facilities;
- The Duke of Edinburgh Scheme which includes overnight camping;
- The Jubilee Challenge which is part of Ten Tors;
- The National Junior Wheelchair games at Stoke Mandeville.

We are always looking for new exciting opportunities for our learners.



Communication & Decision Making

The Team comprises of a Teacher, Speech & Language input, Behaviour Support Co-ordinators and Advocacy Leads, as well as other skilled staff who deliver interventions (such as The Hub and Play facilitation).

The Team meet regularly to ensure we understand our learners' needs, seeking additional, external support where necessary. In this way we strive to identify the underlying communication behind behaviour, which is the first step towards cultivating safe, respectful and responsible communication.





Communication & Decision Making

We believe all behaviour is communication, so we respond by listening and working to understand the needs of our learners.

The Communication & Decision Making Team (CDMT) use principles of nurture, understanding of attachments and Maslow's hierarchy to support pupils to effectively learning and the school environment.

They work collaboratively with class teams, the family and other professionals to reflect on why a learner may be presenting with behaviours that cause concern. They look at how and what the learner is communicating and how their needs can be met while cultivating safe, responsible and respectful communication. Together they consider how to build effective relationships, new learning strategies and possible environmental or curriculum across the range of the environments the young person may spend time in.

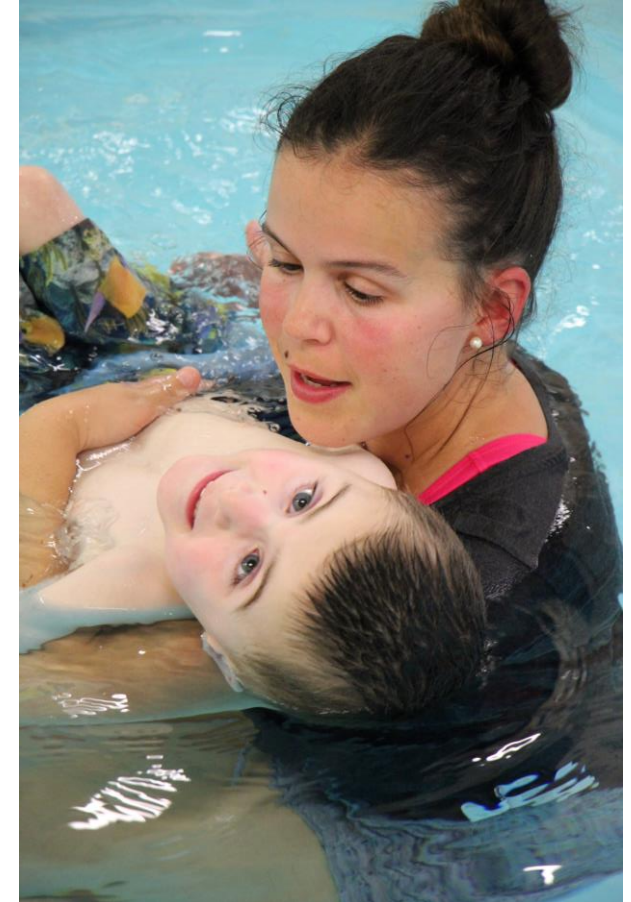
It is important for staff to create an environment where our learners feel safe, are happy and engaged. We encourage positive behaviour through good role modelling, and an expectation that learners will want to do well. Our aim is to promote safe, respectful and responsible behaviour right across the school community. By responding to behaviour as communication, we are able to provide support for those communicating primarily through their behaviours. We enable learners to access and use more socially appropriate methods of communication. Learners may be anxious, under stress or emotionally vulnerable and need individual support pathways. These pathways can re-establish, or indeed establish, that interaction with another person can be a positive thing.

Therapies

Our therapy provision is mainly provided by external therapists, appointed by the Local Authority, who visit our schools to work with pupils to support their EHCP requirements.

We do employ a small number of therapists at both Bidwell Brook School and Ellen Tinkham School and College to assist with staff training and supporting pupils with day-to-day input.

Both schools have a hydrotherapy pool which is used on a daily basis.



Visual Impairment



Within the Federation teaching team is a Visual Access Leader who is additionally qualified in Visual Impairment. The Visual Access Leader will assess functional vision in a variety of environments, set appropriate visual stimulation programmes, advise on access to the curriculum and provide advice on teaching programmes and individuals targets.

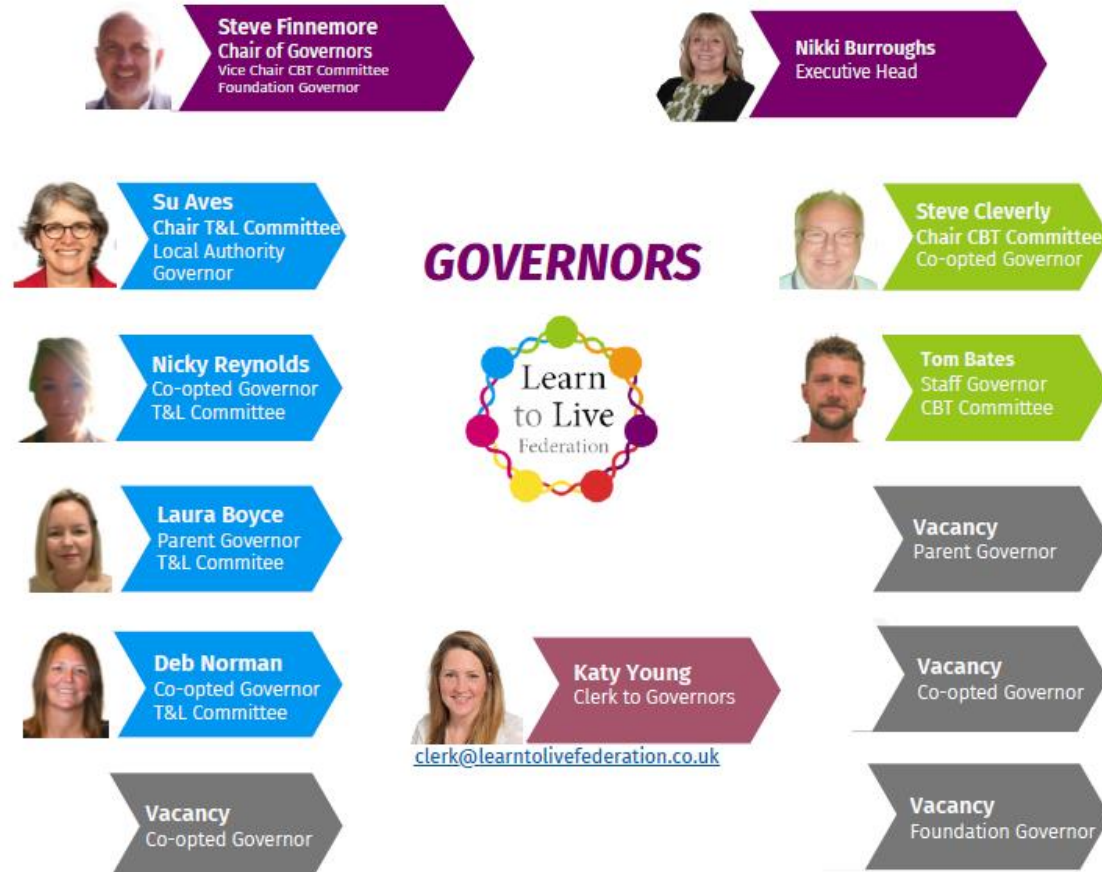
The schools adopt an holistic approach and therefore the Visual Access Leader works collaboratively with the Rehabilitation Officer for Visually Impaired Children, the advisory teacher for VI, the therapy team, the school team and parents.



Governance and Leadership



The Governing Body



As Governors, we understand how important it is for parents and families to feel happy and confident when choosing a school for their child. The learners are educated and supported by a very dedicated team of staff who work closely with us to ensure everyone realises their potential.

The Governing Body consists of 12 individuals from a plethora of professional backgrounds. As any good Governing Body should be, we are engaged in shaping the strategic direction and development of the Federation and are constantly monitoring and evaluating ways to move forward for the benefit of each school and the Federation.

The Governing Body has two standing committees which mirror the Senior Leadership Teams. We also ensure key staff are held to account to enable our learners to receive the best education and learning opportunities possible.



MANAGEMENT





Our Partners



EVERY LEARNER WILL BE EMPOWERED AND ENABLED TO LEAD AN INDEPENDENT, HEALTHY AND FULFILLING LIFE

The Trust formed in July 2012 and comprises of 10 special schools and settings across Devon including the two Learn to Live Federations schools. As a co-operative foundation trust, its aims are:

- ensuring that all have full and fair access to specialist resources according to their respective identified needs;
- ensuring that all have equality of opportunities in each and every aspect of their education;
- ensuring that all have a voice that is at least as high profile as their mainstream peers;
- building a coherent and inspiring learning journey for all;
- increasing engagement and ownership of the schools within their respective communities (local, regional and specialist communities);
- working in partnership with other schools and colleges to promote best possible outcomes;
- supporting each and every school within the Trust to raise standards.

Learn to Live 19-25



The Federation has very close links with the Learn to Live 19-25 Community Interest Company which is also located at our Hollow Lane site in Exeter.

This company formed in September 2016 and currently has 10 clients who access this Social Care service.

19-25 provides a personalised programme based on the individual's needs, with a focus on life skills and community inclusion. The programmes are designed to continue a young adult's journey into independent or supported living.

19-25's Director and Company Secretary are also members of the Federation's Senior Leadership and staff team, and the Governing Body are members.



The ever changing educational landscape makes for exciting but challenging times. The focus on the self-improving school system has never been so great, however the success or failure of such a system is dependent on the development of deep partnerships between schools.

In May 2018, Ellen Tinkham School successfully gained teaching school status and Senior Leaders formed the South West Specialist Teaching School Alliance (SWSTSA) in partnership with other Special Schools and MATs across the region.

As an Alliance, we have a wide range of expertise in all aspects of SEND. Our Alliance continues to work to improve the educational experiences for **ALL** learners. Current projects include an Outreach support programme whereby SLEs, and other appropriate staff, work alongside mainstream colleagues to ensure they are able to meet the needs of their students with SEND. We are also working with the Laurel Trust who are funding our research project around linking EHCPs to individual curriculum.

In 2021, SWSTSA joined forces with a number of Teaching School Alliances across the two Devon Hubs, Kingsbridge and Colyton, who are working collaboratively as SWIFT - “South West Institute for Teachers”. Ellen Tinkham School is leading SWSTSA to provide the SEND element to schools across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.



The Hollow Lane Club is a Registered Charity dedicated to enhancing the lives of children and young people with special needs and their families. We run a series of inclusive out-of-school-hours clubs for children and young people with special needs and their siblings at Bidwell Brook School, Ellen Tinkham School and Ellen Tinkham College. The Club provides activities after school, at weekends and in the school holidays.

The focus of The Hollow Lane Club is for the children and young people who attend to have fun, be creative and learn new things. We hope that they will connect with friends, have new experiences that broaden their horizons and give them memories. Children and young people enjoy a variety of activities including outings, sports activities and workshops to include drama, music, art and craft.

All the Clubs are Ofsted registered, with HM Inspectors quoting at our last “outstanding” inspection: “The Club prides itself on providing rich, vibrant and engaging activities. It continually seeks to ignite children’s interests and to challenge their capabilities.”

Everything that we do is led by the voices, wishes and needs of the young people. We provide them with opportunities to socialise and engage in fun and recreational activities with support and guidance from specialist play workers.

We offer a positive, safe and successful club for children and young people often excluded from opportunities available to the majority. We strive to keep costs to a minimum to keep our organisation accessible to all. The charge to families is a heavily subsidised rate which is supported by charitable fundraising.



Thank you for your interest in our wonderful school!

**We are very proud of our learners and staff,
and all their achievements.**

