



Photo: Hampton Dene, Hereford

An aerial photograph showing the Hampton Dene Primary School building, a large green field, and surrounding residential houses and trees.

Physical intervention training for Hampton Dene School

Background

Hampton Dene Primary School is based towards the eastern side of Hereford and offers a safe, secure and stimulating educational environment to over 240 pupils, from reception to year six.

The mission of the school is that children will be given opportunities to strive towards their optimum potential and develop skills, values and attitudes to live productively and responsibly in a diverse and ever-changing world.

Headed by Liz Kearns, the school serves a wide catchment area and works with parents and children from all backgrounds. In each year, a small number of pupils will be designated as in need of additional care and support. At Hampton Dene School, these needs are generally as a result of an autism spectrum condition, speech or language difficulties or other communication issues.

As a result of these conditions, the affected pupils may from time-to-time exhibit behaviours that are potentially harmful either to themselves or to others. Staff need to be able to deal with these circumstances, de-escalating any potentially aggressive behaviour and, as a last result, know

how to hold pupils safely and effectively whilst maintaining the pupil's dignity and self-respect.

Working with Hoople Training

The school has for many years worked with Hoople to undertake training in managing potentially threatening behaviours. The most recent programme was a one day BILD-accredited refresher course attended by 15 teaching and support staff in early 2016.

“Staff reported feeling empowered by their attendance on the training programme.”

The programme was developed with the specific needs of Hampton Dene in mind. Both theoretical and practical hands-on sessions were included, each addressing the real issues faced by school staff. Whilst there was a reminder in terms of the legal requirements for the school, much of the time was spent on understanding pupils' motivations and exploring strategies for de-escalating potentially threatening behaviour. Practical exercises were also included so that staff could practise and gain confidence in holding techniques.

The course was run by Charlie Watkins, Hoople's Lead Behaviour Support and Care Trainer. Charlie has a deep understanding and knowledge of the school, having worked with them for many years, coupled with many years of practical experience in working with children.

Results

Staff reported feeling empowered by their attendance on the training programme. Whilst no-one likes to hold children, attendees were confident that they knew when

it was appropriate to do so and how to do this correctly – with minimum risk to both themselves and the child.

The course was felt to benefit the children themselves. By undertaking the course, teaching and support staff are consistent in terms of the language they use when approaching a child who is displaying behaviours that challenge. Children recognise the language used and understand what is meant. This often helps to diffuse the situation and the distress they feel.

Testimonials

Liz says: "Charlie is always keen to understand what the school needs and then develops a training programme that fits us. We have built up a great relationship with her and she is flexible, open and completely non-judgemental. Nothing phases her as she has experienced and seen most of the behaviours that we talk about. I would definitely recommend her and Hoople for the practical, relevant and useful training that they offer."

You can find more case studies like this one on our website: hoopleltd.co.uk

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