

# Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service Summer 2025



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## Welcome to the Summer Edition of our Newsletter



*1 - The photo shows, Jane Peters, Head of service, she has curly-light coloured hair and is wearing a turquoise scarf.*

Welcome to our final newsletter of the year as we approach the summer holidays with only less than a couple of weeks before we break up. My thanks go to all the team for their hard work over the year and also to our schools and families who have worked collaboratively with us to get the best outcomes for the children and young people.

I am delighted that the focus for our last newsletter of the year is on Early Years which anyone who knows me will tell you that this is what I am extremely passionate about. Working with preschool children and their families is such a privilege and its been fantastic to stand alongside so many of our little ones as they grow and develop, each at their own pace, with big and small steps and often other challenges. I have found reading the stories written by some of our parents about their

experience very humbling and emotional and I know I speak for the team in saying thank you for sharing your experiences .

Its been another incredible year with so many highlights including our fantastic Family Day in June at Beech Lodge (thank you to them again), our preschool trip to Legoland and the many events the team has organised including football coaching, cooking events and transition picnics. We have also increased the number of training events for schools, college and early years providers as well as social care to support the workforce in their understanding of how to support young people with sensory impairment in their setting.

The end of the year is always one of transition, children moving on from our preschool programme into school for the first time, primary into secondary and of course our school leavers who we wish well for their next step into adulthood. Keep in touch we love to hear about how you are doing.

I hope you enjoy reading all about our young people and hearing about their life experiences. As always we value your feedback, please do fill in our stakeholder surveys and keep up to date with what's happening via the website and our Facebook page.

Have a wonderful summer. September comes round very quickly.

With best wishes

Jane

## Spotlight Edition: Early Years

### Chester's Early Years by Suzy, Chester's Mum



*2 - The photo shows a family photo with a mum, dad and son smiling. They each hold a mask, hat or sign.*



*3 - The photo shows a boy sat on his mum's lap, having his face painted by a lady.*

Our son Chester was born prematurely, he failed a screening that tested his hearing a few days prior to being discharged from the Neonatal Unit. Chester was followed up by Audiology who conducted hours of diagnostic testing in both ears, it was at this point we found out our son had bilateral moderate sensorineural hearing loss. Chester was fitted with hearing aids when he was 3 months old, we were very fortunate that our son's Specialist Paediatrician referred Chester to the Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service. Chester has had the continuity of building a very special bond with his teacher for deaf children Leah Redmayne

from the age of three months to four years old. Leah Redmayne and the Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service have been a very important part of our son's life and our families as they have provided ongoing support which will enable our son to have good outcomes and a positive future. Leah has shared her knowledge and expertise with us as a family equipping us with the right tools and resources to help Chester to develop his language and listening skills. Leah introduced us to "Baby Beats" which is an early intervention resource with motivating and fun musical activities for babies and toddlers with hearing loss. It takes a while to accept that your child has a hearing impairment and in Chester's case this is permanent and could deteriorate further in the future. Although this can be a worrying time as you wonder how they will manage as they are growing older and going to school, we have never felt alone on this journey, we have been so well supported by Leah and the Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service who are so compassionate about what they do. They will always put our children's needs at the forefront hoping to give them the best start in life at such an early age.

Chester was tested for genetic conditions and when he was around 18 months old, we had a diagnosis of Baraitser-Winter Syndrome (A rare genetic condition). We waited a number of months for these results, our home visits with Leah gave us the safe space to be able to discuss our worries and have that emotional support. Chester is very excited when he greets Leah with "hello Lea Lea" and starts rummaging through her bag as soon as she sits down to see what toys and books she has brought for them to do some fun, learning activities. Chester has attended the Chatty Monkeys pre-school group in Spencer's Wood once a fortnight on a Tuesday morning since he was a baby, this group is run by the Teacher's for the Deaf. We were welcomed into this group and over the four years we have attended it has been really lovely to see the positive impact these sessions have made on the children's communication and confidence. These sessions are very popular and it is always nice to meet new children and their parents. This has given Chester the opportunity of playing with children that have a variety of hearing impairments and building friendships with them. These sessions are informal and very relaxed with open play at the beginning of the session followed on by group story time and singing and the opportunity for all the children to have snacks at the table together. We always

incorporate key dates in the calendar into these sessions, Chester always found the session before Christmas magical. Audiology visits these sessions and Mary and has been able to make new ear moulds for Chester over the years, this is a fantastic service allowing us less appointments at the hospital in an environment where the children are familiar with and may be a bit more amenable. We have always gone for nice bright hearing aids so they are easier to find when pulled out! These sessions are just as beneficial for the parents as it gives us a chance to talk to other parents whilst having a coffee and share our experiences. We are able to bounce ideas off each other as well as supporting each other on matters such as medical investigations, nursery funding/placement, applying for disability living allowance and transition to school. The Teachers for the Deaf have been able to provide advice, support and signposting to other hearing impaired groups our children may benefit from. Other Practitioners such as Speech & Language Therapists & Audiologists have visited these sessions as well as charities Berkshire Deaf Children's Society (BDCS) and Chloe & Sophie's Special Ear fund. It has given us an insight into the amount of local support groups our children could join locally where there are able to play and communicate with other children with hearing impairments.

We found it hard to find Chester a suitable nursery placement, Leah offered us guidance and supported us with nursery visits which was really helpful as she was able to ask some questions which were relevant but hadn't even occurred to us and assess whether the environment would impact Chester's hearing. Leah and Chester's Speech and Language therapist have visited Chester at his mainstream nursery, Specialist nursery and home, providing the support to the Chester, the nursery staff and us. Chester's preference currently is to communicate through Makaton signing rather than verbal speech. We always back up what we have said with a Makaton sign and repetition, we find now that Chester is initiating the conversation which is really fantastic. Chester has a number of health problems related to his genetic condition and will require significant support with his future development and education. Leah worked tirelessly supporting us with

an application for an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) for Chester, we honestly believe that if we had done this process on our own, we would most likely not have been successful securing an EHCP for Chester. The application can be quite a daunting process but Leah was able to navigate us through this with the least amount of stress and provide helpful suggestions. Leah has helped Chester transition to new hearing aids which she has fitted radio transmitters into and we now use a radio aid which helps Chester by transmitting the speakers voice directly to Chester's hearing aids. It works by minimizing background noise and improving the signal-to-noise ratio. This assisted learning device can also be used with Cochlear implants.

We cannot believe that Chester will be graduating from Chatty Monkey's in July this year but we are very pleased that he will continue to be supported through his transition to Primary School in September by the Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service. We visited a number of schools with Leah to see which best met Chester's needs and had an immediate preference as parents. We did encounter some difficulties obtaining our named preference, Jane and Leah were able to offer their support to help expedite this decision. It is a huge relieve to us knowing that Chester will continue to be supported by teachers and practitioners in a Specialist school where he will continue to make friends but we hope very much to keep in contact with you all and look forward to hearing how your children are getting on at school.

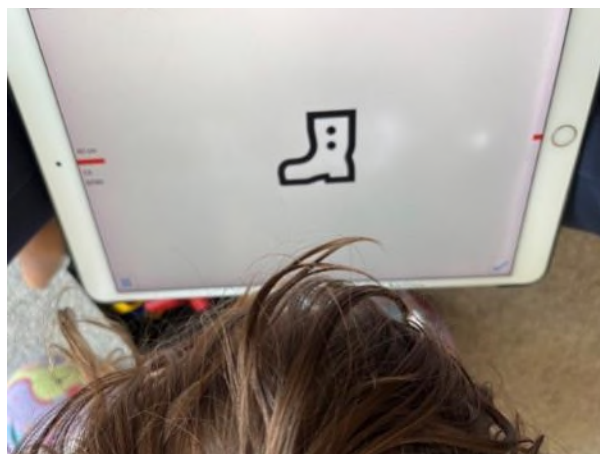
Chester recently attended a day trip to Legoland which was organised by the Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service, it was a really fantastic opportunity for all the children, parents and some of the teachers to spend a really fun packed day together.

We have always attended the Family Fun Day also organised by the Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service, Chester enjoys interacting with the animals, his face lights up when he is jumping on the bungee trampolines, he chooses which character he would like to be with the face painting and loved the sensory bus. These days have always been very hot but it has also given us the chance to meet new families over a nice cuppa and tasty treats! There are many other activities to take part in and helpful information stands.

We will be forever grateful for all the support we have had over the years, The Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service really do go above and beyond for our children and we have always felt as a family that we could contact them if we had any concerns.

## Lexi's Progress from Light Perception to Picture Recognition

Lexi, who is now three years old was initially referred, presenting with very little reaction to light. After a year and half of working with Lexi and her mum, she has demonstrated functional vision far exceeding our initial expectations. Lexi soon progressed from detecting bright lights to tracking reflective objects and then to discriminating colours. Developing on this, she began to recognise familiar objects and pictures in books, demonstrating emerging visual and cognitive skills. One day, while looking at a "Balloon Pop" game on the iPad, Lexi spotted and said "rainbow". Her mum and I were amazed that she could recognise such a small picture. This led to the introduction of picture cards and eventually Kays Picture symbols. Lexi's still needs to hold the pictures close to her eyes, but she can now name many pictures of everyday items; anything from 'shoes' to 'house'. Lexi's amazing progress with using her vision owes so much to her mum's hard work at home. Between our sessions, she's not only followed all the advice but has run with it and added in her own ideas.



*4 - The photo shows an iPad screen with the image of a boot in the middle.*

## Lockie's Story - Developing Empathy in the Early Years

Lachlan (Lockie), has been sharing some top tips for communication in his Nursery this week with his hearing peers.

With the help of fairy wings, a wand and Freddie and the Fairy by Julia Donaldson book, Lockie was able to talk about feeling 'cross' when he misses out on hearing something correctly at Nursery.

He enjoyed the story alongside his friends then took turns dressing up. He was able to appreciate the humour in the story as the fairy kept getting the wishes wrong but also understanding how upset the fairy became after continually getting it 'wrong'

Lockie and his classmates took turns dressing up as the fairy and his friends all enjoyed reenacting the story in costume.

We talked about the three golden rules when talking to someone who is deaf

- 1 – Look at the person you are talking to
- 2 – Don't cover your mouth and speak clearly
- 3 - Use my radio aid

His friends all agreed this was a good way to help Lockie in nursery and said they would try to follow these rules to help him.

A great session to develop empathy and give young children tools for effective communication for young people who have a hearing loss.

Mum, Alicia added:

Teachers of the Deaf have been supporting Lockie at nursery this year which has been invaluable for him in his setting. He loves his sessions with his TODs, especially playing the fun games, and we are so grateful for their hard work and support. Lockie's expressive spoken language and comprehension have come on so much, and whilst we still have moments where we misunderstand each other, these are getting fewer and further between. His confidence at nursery has skyrocketed and he has a tight circle of friends, and moreover he is more confident in

advocating for himself, telling us when he can't hear, when things are too loud, and when his hearing aids have run out of battery.

We also really benefit from Chatty Monkeys where we love meeting other Deaf/HH children and their grown-ups. We so appreciate the support Lockie and Freya receive from the BSCS, and look forward to working with them next year and watching Lockie grow as he approaches school age.



5 - The photo shows a brown haired boy in a blue and white striped top, holding a wand and the book 'Freddie and the Fairy'.



*6 - The photo shows a brown haired boy in a blue and white striped top, sitting next to a brown haired teacher who is holding the book 'Freddie and the Fairy'*

## Joint working - Early Years Audiology

The Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service (BSCS) has always believed that partnership working with families and other hearing care professionals is the best and most effective way to support families of newly identified babies and children. As a Service, we work very hard to ensure that the holistic support in the early days, months and years after a little one has been diagnosed with a hearing loss, is as seamless and joined up with other Services as it can be.

In March 2024, representatives from the NDCS came to spend a day with us here in Berkshire, to look at our pre-school provision.

The feedback after the visit was very positive:

*"What truly stood out was the seamless coordination among the services. Every professional we spoke with was making a conscious effort to ensure families did not fall through the gaps. This was reflected*

*in the stories the families told us of the incredible support they had received."*

So, how did we achieve this praise?

Our Chatty Monkeys groups across the county are supported by our colleagues from Audiology – a clinician attends the sessions to take earmould impressions. This is so that families do not have to go to the Audiology Department in the hospital so often when their little one is really small and requires frequent earmould impressions.

We also hold joint clinics at our Audiology Departments twice per week, every week throughout the academic year. These clinics are run with the Clinical Audiologists and the Educational Audiologist from BSCS working together for children under the age of 5 years. These appointments are important for families who are at the early stage of their journey after a hearing loss/deafness has been identified, so that they feel supported in a comprehensive way, with all the Services working in partnership with the families with the child at the heart.

Have a look at the photograph of Opal having her hearing testing in one of our joint Under 5's clinics. Fatima is the clinician in the photo. Fatima wears a cochlear implant and was supported by BSCS throughout her early years and schooling- look at her now!

In Berkshire, something else that really pleases us is the number of our pre-school children who use a radio aid.

We passionately believe that optimal early listening is absolutely key to the best outcomes for children later on (and by the way, all the evidence supports this)

We know that hearing aids and cochlear implants are fantastic pieces of kit to help with auditory access, but we also know that they have their limitations too. For example, their optimum 'operating range' is about 1.5m, just as when a normally hearing person starts to struggle to hear a speaker who is getting further and further away from them, the same is true of hearing aids.

We also know that small children spend a lot of their time in noisy places- nursery, the car, soft play, the home even.

Radio aids can help with these challenging listening situations for even very little children. So, as soon as your little one begins to get mobile and move away from you, you will find that your Teacher of the Deaf will start to talk about radio aids with you.

We were so happy, on our recent trip to Legoland, to see so many parents, grandparents and carers wearing a radio aid transmitter around their neck! Have a look at the Legoland photos and you will see them.

All in all, we are very proud of the work that we do with our professional partners and our parents with our pre-school cohort. However, we are not complacent and are always looking for ways to make things even better, so if you have any feedback, please do complete the parental feedback form that was emailed to you in early June.



*7 - The photo shows a blond girl sitting down, a dark-haired lady crouches in front, smiling at her. A few toys lay on the table between them.*

## Busy Bees: A Summer of Sensory Exploration, Connection, and Growth!



*8 - The photo shows three children around a circular table, rolling and stamping playdough.*

As the summer term comes to an end, we look back at the great Busy Bees sessions our little ones have enjoyed!

Our group provides a unique space for young children with vision impairments to explore and develop alongside peers who share similar experiences, fostering a truly family-like atmosphere.

Throughout the term, our Busy Bees have ventured in a world of sensory discovery. From the calming scents and varied textures of homemade playdough – squishing, rolling, and shaping to develop fine motor skills – to the wonderfully messy mark-making with flour and paint, engaging touch and smell, every activity is designed to enhance their understanding of the world.

We've seen great progress in hand-eye coordination as they crafted shiny VE Day medals and beautiful Father's Day cards. The children have loved exploring our sensory room and soft play area, building

spatial awareness and confidence. They also joined in lively singing sessions that boost auditory skills and participation.

Beyond the engaging activities, the focus of Busy Bees lies in our incredible little community. It's been so wonderful to see parents connecting, sharing invaluable experiences, and offering each other support and guidance. The visits from the rest of our VI team have further enriched these sessions, bringing their expertise and warmth.

Thank you to all our families who made this summer term so special. We've celebrated creativity, fostered independence, and built a supportive network where every child can thrive. We can't wait to welcome you back for more adventures next academic year!



9 - The photo shows two children making marks with their fingers in flour.



*10 - The photo shows a young boy covered in flour after using it to mark make with his fingers.*



*11 - The photo shows an adult and a group of children gathering around the table to create Father's Day cards, using buttons, pipe cleaners and card.*



*12 - The photo shows a child lying down on a soft mat in a sensory room with a light tunnel and a light up coloured squares on the walls.*



*13 - Two children sit on the floor waiting patiently for a singing session. One of the children wears a multicoloured curly wig and looks at the camera.*



*14 - The photo shows two children having fun in the ball pit.*

### Max's Early Years by Deena, Max's Mum

I wanted to share a few words about the support we've received from the Berkshire Sensory Consortium over the past four years, in the hope it might offer some encouragement to other parents just starting out on a similar journey.

When Max was diagnosed with hearing loss as a baby, we were thrown into a world we knew nothing about. But from the very start, the Berkshire Sensory Consortium has been our steady guide. Our Teacher of the Deaf, Lisa and later on, Hannah, began visiting us at home when Max was just a couple months old. They brought games, activities, advice and so much reassurance, helping not only Max's development but helping us as a family understand what support he might need going forward and how to navigate this. Over the last four years, Hannah has become part of our lives, our family. Max looks forward to her visits, he sees her as someone who comes to play, his friend, not just someone there to check on him. He trusts her and enjoys her company, we all do. She's been our lighthouse in what could have been very foggy waters.

The support we've received has been varied and personal, we've always felt like individuals under their care, with the understanding that no 2 children are the same. Max was given amazing hearing technology, a radio aid, which we use out and about and carers at nursery use it too. Max can be very busy, having the radio aid helps him focus and reassures us that he can hear us in those noisier places. Hannah often visits the nursery to ensure the staff are confident using his tech and understand his needs, making sure everyone is on the same page with Max's care. We've also attended the wonderful early years group, Chatty Monkeys, provided by the sensory consortium. This is where Max has had the chance to play with other deaf children and we've met other parents walking a similar path. We're honestly heartbroken to be graduating from the group this year, it's been such a constant and valued part of our lives.

The impact this support has had on Max is immense. He's a confident, outgoing, and funny little boy who isn't afraid to chat away and join in with his peers. I truly believe that the care and expertise poured into helping him with his communication has played a huge part in that. As he prepares to move to big school, I feel incredibly reassured knowing that Hannah will continue to support him there, it feels like having someone on the inside, someone who truly knows him and will advocate for him.

As a parent, the help we've had has been invaluable. We were guided to the right charities, helped with DLA applications, and introduced to life-changing technology that came with ongoing support, all without charge. Emotionally, Chatty Monkeys has been an oasis. Sitting with other parents of deaf children over the years, sharing stories, celebrating milestones, and even grieving the hard days together has created a bond like no other. Seeing our children play together, all with their "special ears," has been beautiful. It's one of the only places Max has seen himself reflected in his peers. And under all the fun of pancake flipping and story time, we've learned so much as parents too—how to truly support our children. Jane and her team are phenomenal, and we feel incredibly lucky to have had them walking this journey with us.

To any new parents just starting out with the service, take a deep breath. You're not alone. It might feel overwhelming right now, but the support

from the Sensory Consortium will be there for you every step of the way. Trust your instincts, ask all the questions, and know that it's okay not to have all the answers straight away. There's a whole community here waiting to welcome you.

My advice would be: lean into the support, attend the groups if you can, don't be afraid to ask for help, or say Hi! to a new face. This service is full of kind, knowledgeable people who want to see your child thrive. You'll learn so much, and along the way, you'll find your confidence and your voice as a parent of a deaf child.

Deena-Jay

### Farm visit to nursery



*15 - The photo shows a dark-haired girl smiling while stroking a lamb.*

The farm came to visit Zoha's nursery in Slough. All of the children were excited to see ponies, lambs, goats, chickens and even a tortoise amongst other animals. Here is a picture of Zoha petting a lamb with her nursery teacher.

## Chatty Monkeys West preschool group



16 - The photo shows a group of children and adults, looking at a teacher who is showing them camping equipment.



17 - The photo shows a group of children and adults sat around a table, an adult has a camp stove with sausages in a frying pan. They are singing '10 fat sausages sizzling in a pan'.

What a term we have had at Chatty Monkeys, it has been filled with all things holidays!

The children have enjoyed activities that we have set up to support our topic such as sand in the sand tray, a tent and sleeping bag and small world camping toys.

We have focused on the story of 'Sand between my toes' by Caroline Cross and the heat has helped to recreate what it would really be like on our holidays. The children listened to the story, enjoying an ice pop and relaxing!

The children have loved some of our activities such as making hot dogs, packing a suitcase and thinking of all the things we may need for the beach. We have planted sunflowers and our final session will be our picnic at Palmer Park to celebrate our children that are embarking on school in September.

In the session we really appreciate how much our families enjoy coming together and sharing their experiences of their children's journeys but also exploring the activities that are set up.

During our sessions we love to provide the children with a language rich opportunity and demonstrate to our parents ideas and suggestions of what they could try at home, using everyday activities, that can help good language development.



*18 - The photo shows a group of three children and one adult playing with toy camping equipment.*



*19 - The photo shows two young children sat on adults laps, eating hot dogs.*



*20 - The photo shows two children and an adult sitting in a tent, with the door open.*

## Preschool Group trip to Legoland!

In June, our Chatty Monkeys group were lucky enough to receive tickets to Legoland Windsor, courtesy of Merlin's Magic Wand and we enjoyed a fabulous day out. We were very lucky with the weather and the children explored the park either with the group or as a family. It was a great opportunity for families to be together in an informal environment and the children to form even stronger bonds with each other. The favourite ride for us all was the 'Scarab bouncer' which both Jane and Jody went on with some of the children again and again and again, which was great fun. Due to the trip being such a success, we hope to do something similar during the next academic year.



*21 - The photo shows an adult and five children sitting on a ride, hovering above the ground at Legoland.*



*22 - The photo shows a blond boy and his dad both in glasses sitting on a ride at Legoland.*



*23 - The photo shows two dark haired ladies sat either side of a blond girl, on a ride at Legoland.*



*24 - The photo shows groups of families sat on picnic blankets, enjoying picnics, on the grass at Legoland*



*25 - The photo shows two children and their adults, on the helicopter ride at Legoland.*



*26 - The photo shows two children, two mums and a buggy at Legoland.*



*27 - The photo shows a boy putting his hand up and smiling while driving a yellow Lego car at Legoland.*

## Chatty Monkeys at Swings and Smiles



*28 - The photo shows a blond girl sitting in a black go-kart in the sun.*



*29 - The photo shows two children playing on playground equipment in the sun.*



*30 - The photo shows two children pushing a wooden wheelbarrow along a path in the sun.*



*31 - The photo shows two children playing in the Swings and Smiles grounds in the sun.*



*32 - The photo shows a blonde girl in a pink top, bouncing on an outdoor trampoline in the sun.*

As the term comes to a close the weather has been beautiful which meant that our last session at Swings and Smiles was a picnic outside after playing, bouncing, riding, jumping, pushing and running on all the lovely equipment! We also had five babies at the picnic who were busy enjoying the shade and a snack or two snuggling with their mummies while the big ones played. It was lovely for our families to get together in a supportive environment.

Everyone is always welcome and we make sure that our sessions on a Tuesday afternoon are run on the alternate Tuesday to the Spencers Wood Chatty Monkeys West sessions so you can come to both if you wish. You will see some familiar faces here from the Chatty Monkeys West sessions.

If it is raining, inside there is a ball pit, sensory room, swing, lots of lights and interactive music activities as well as all the usual toys and activities that we can bring in from the preschool room next door. Cars are our favourite at the moment!

Have a lovely Summer and we look forward to seeing you in September.



*33 - The image shows two individuals and a large tricycle. The tricycle has a red frame, yellow wheels, and black tires. The front wheel is larger than the two rear*

wheels. The person in the front seat, identified as Lockie, is wearing a blue shirt, green shorts, and red shoes. Lockie is holding the handlebars and appears to be pedalling. The person behind is identified as Jody, Teacher of the Deaf. She is holding onto the back of the tricycle. Jody is wearing a pink shirt and black pants. The tricycle is positioned on a paved surface with visible painted lines.



34 - A two children playing on a playground

## Ummayah's Poetry

Congratulations to Ummayah for her amazing poetry writing.

Ummayah's poem, *Our Planet*, was chosen by The Young Writers UK Publishing Portal from thousands of entries nationwide from students aged 11-18 who wrote poems on any theme and style. Her poem has been published in one of their annual anthologies showcasing poems, called *The Beautiful Truth - The Poetry Patchwork*.

A copy of this will remain in the National Archives of the British Library forever!

## Our Planet

Our planet is not being destroyed,  
So do not tell me,  
We need to save our planet.  
Even though Arctic sea ice is declining,  
Even though there's deforestation due to mining.  
Even though glaciers are retreating,  
Even though our planet is heating.  
We don't need to do anything,  
It's just a joke.  
We say  
Our oceans are dying,  
Our rainforests are crying,  
Our people are experiencing increased drought,  
Our animals close to extinction cry and shout.  
We can sit back and relax.  
We think  
It's a huge problem  
Massive crop and fishery collapse,  
Dirty water coming out of taps.  
Forest fires burning,  
Very few sustainable wind turbines turning.  
Nature doesn't need our help.  
Do not think that  
Our planet needs saving.

*\*Now read from bottom to top.*

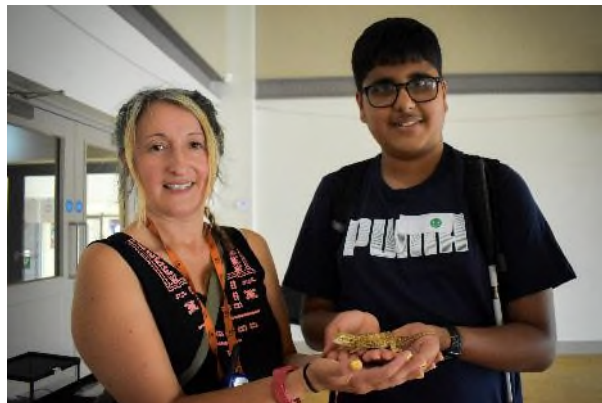
**Ummayah Razaq**



35 - certificate she received for her work

## Events

### Family fun day



36 - There is a photograph of two individuals. The person on the left is wearing a sleeveless top with a patterned design, while the person on the right is wearing a black T-shirt with the "PUMA" logo visible. Both individuals are holding a lizard together.



37 - The image shows a golden retriever sitting on a paved surface, positioned in the foreground. The dog is wearing a harness with a visible strap across its body. Behind the dog, a person is standing, wearing a white t-shirt with colourful text and graphics, along with denim shorts. The person's face is blurred. The dog and the person are

*close to each other, with the dog positioned slightly to the left and the person standing upright behind it*



*38 - The image shows a scene from an event, with a table set up under a covered area. On the left side of the image, a woman wearing a white shirt and dark pants is standing behind the table, engaging with attendees. The table is covered with informational materials, including brochures and other printed items. To the right of the table, a man and a woman are standing close to each other, facing the table. The man is wearing a blue shirt and light-coloured shorts, while the woman is wearing a white sleeveless top and patterned pants.*

On 21st June 2025 Berkshire Sensory Consortium held our Family fun day. The event was a wonderful opportunity for families to meet each other in a relaxed environment and it was lovely to see new connections being made and friendships develop. Face painting and the bungee trampoline proved big hits and even Matilda the tortoise kept making her escape from the hall to have a look. There was something for everyone to enjoy from Lego, football - beat the goalie, arts and crafts, Swings and Smiles resources, the Sensory bus to making popcorn and much more. Our partner organisations - National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS), Berkshire Vision and VoluntEars - Volunteering Abroad were there to talk to families.

Thank you to all those that made the day possible, with a special thanks to Beech Lodge school for allowing us to host the event at their fantastic site.



39 - Jane speaking to the families at the end of the afternoon



40 - A person giving a person a blue bag to a person.



*41 A group of people outside a building*



*42 A person sitting at a table with a group of people looking at a Jar in a ART and Craft activity*



43 The image shows two children interacting with a setup involving red plastic bins topped with white surfaces. On the white surfaces, there are cylindrical tubes standing upright, and some have star-shaped stickers placed nearby. The child on the left is wearing a purple shirt, blue shorts, and red shoes, and is holding a blue ball in their hand, appearing to be placing or dropping it into one of the cylindrical tubes. The child on the right is wearing a white shirt with colourful designs, red shorts, and is also holding a blue ball, seemingly engaged in the same activity.



*44 A child holding a trophy*



*45 The image shows a young boy and a woman interacting with a tortoise named Matilda. The boy is positioned to the left of the tortoise, crouching slightly and touching its shell with his right hand. He is wearing a light blue shirt with a design, black shorts, and blue shoes. The woman is standing to the right of the tortoise, leaning forward slightly and holding a leash attached to the tortoise. She is wearing a*

*green patterned dress and glasses. The tortoise is on a paved surface, and its shell is visible with distinct ridges. In the background, there is a wooden fence running horizontally across the image, with greenery and trees visible beyond the fence*



*46 - A group of children playing with lights in a sensory booth*



*47 A child named Noah playing with colourful lights in a sensory bus.*



*48 - A child holding a piece of paper with a picture of a banana. He is wearing a bright orange shirt and smiling happily*



*49 - A person painting a person's hand*

## Primary Cooking Event



*50 - The image shows a cooking activity taking place in a kitchen setting. There are five individuals involved, including three children and an adult. The names are Billy, Yash, and Arwa. - On the left side of the image, one child (Billy) is seated at the table wearing a blue apron. He is working on a bowl of dough with the assistance of an adult standing next to him. The adult is positioned slightly behind Billy, leaning forward to help him with the dough. - On the right side of the image, two children (Yash and Arwa) are seated at the table. Both are wearing blue aprons and are working with bowls placed in front of them. Their faces are blurred. Each child has a bowl in front of them, presumably containing cheese dough. A small container, possibly holding ingredients, is placed near Billy's bowl. The table is clean and organized, with utensils and mats placed neatly.*

During the Easter holidays, 5 young people from Berkshire Sensory Consortium developed their skills and confidence in the kitchen. Learning how to use talking scales and grating cheese to make delicious cheese straws and chocolate cereal nests. This event was held in partnership with Berkshire Vision.



*51 - Lux and Jannat rolling out their cheese straw dough*



*52 - Arwa who is wearing a blue apron is placing her cheese straws on the baking tray ready to be baked.*



*53 - The image shows a person identified as Jannat grating cheese. She is wearing a pink sweatshirt with Minnie Mouse designs and a blue apron over it. Her hands are*

*positioned on a grater, which is placed on a pink bowl. The bowl is situated on a red surface, likely a cutting board or mat Year 6 Transition Event*

## Year 6 Transition Event



*54 - The group enjoyed making their positivity jars and filled them with positive things about themselves.*

On Friday 20th June we held our annual year 6 transition event. This year, for the first time, the day was organised for both children with a hearing loss or a vision impairment. The children began the day with some challenges requiring them to work cooperatively and communicate with each other. Everyone worked brilliantly and thankfully everyone escaped from being joined with rope handcuffs. The drainpipe ball rolling was fast and furious and was followed by a period of complete concentration as they attempted to solve Tower of Hanoi puzzles.

After a short break we all set off to build and light a fire on which to toast marshmallows, yes a fire in nearly 30°C heat! After learning about the fire triangle and lots of practice with a flint and steel to light a ball of cotton wool everyone gathered sticks, the fire was started, sticks were added and they toasted marshmallows. It was noted that some students couldn't wait for the toasting and the marshmallows disappeared before they went anywhere near the fire!

After lunch we discussed feelings about moving on up to year 7 and everyone decorated a jar which they filled with notes of what they felt

their superpowers were. One member of the group shared a poster they had created about their deafness and the challenges this can present. They were all interested to see how a Pen Friend could be used to create voice notes on post it notes.

The whole day was summed up beautifully when one student shared that they had learnt that it didn't matter what disability you may have you can achieve the same things as everyone else.



*55 - The group learning about the fire triangle and how to safely use flint and steel to make fire*



*56 - They are standing next to each other and holding a log in their hand.*



*57 - Two children sitting around a fire pit roasting Marshmallow. They are identified as Silver and Billy and they are enjoying.*



*58 - The image shows a small fire burning in a circular metal fire pit placed on a gravel surface. The fire pit has three visible legs supporting it. The flames are active and rising above the rim of the fire pit.*

## All aboard the Bus Event



*59 - The image shows a group of six children standing in front of a large bus. The bus is positioned centrally in the background, with its front visible, including the windshield and headlights. The children are wearing high-visibility vests, which are oversized for some of them, and are standing close together in two rows. The front row consists of three children, while the back row has three children as well.*



*60 - The students got to access the engineering control room.*

During the May half term, 10 young people, some of their siblings and parents from Berkshire Sensory Consortium attended the All Aboard bus event where they got the opportunity to go behind the scenes at Reading bus depot. All the participants got the opportunity to explore where the bus driver sits, find out about different buses and their layouts. The group got to learn how the buses get fixed in the bus garage and how a bus gets cleaned by go through a bus wash.

The event was hosted by Reading bus depot, with guidance from Luke and Ahmed. The event was held in partnership with Berkshire Vision.



*61 - Khalid and Arwa enjoyed exploring the drivers cab and pressing the very loud horn. Both are wearing high-visibility vests. The bus driver's cab includes a steering wheel and various controls visible in front of them. The window of the cab provides a view of the exterior, showing a parking area with a building in the background and some vehicles visible at a distance. The individuals are positioned side by side, with one seated closer to the steering wheel.*



*62 - Billy and his brother, Bryan, enjoyed going through the bus wash.*



*63 - Billy and his brother Bryan, sitting inside the driver's cab of a bus. Both are wearing high-visibility vests. The bus driver's cab includes a steering wheel and various controls visible in front of them. The window of the cab provides a view of the exterior, showing a parking area with a building in the background and some vehicles visible at a distance. The individuals are positioned side by side, with one seated closer to the steering wheel.*

## Reading FC Football Fun Event



*64 - Children taking part in a football drill.*



*65 - A child identified as Sudais is running on a green artificial turf field towards a soccer ball positioned on the ground. Sudais is wearing a black top, blue shorts, and black shoes.*



*66 - Affan on the left, is wearing a black long-sleeve top with a visible name tag and black pants. Charlotte on the right is looking downward and appears to be walking or standing. - Charlotte on the right is wearing a grey hooded jacket, green shorts, and black shoes. She is positioned near a yellow soccer ball on the ground and appears to be moving towards it.*

On Thursday, 5th June, we kicked off an incredible social event for children from The Berkshire Sensory Consortium caseload in Years 4-6 with hearing loss. The action-packed session took place at Goals in Woodley, where our young footballers played on a 3G pitch before heading to the Party Room for a well-earned prize presentation. Every

pupil proudly received a medal and certificate, marking their achievements on the pitch!

This was a fantastic opportunity to train and play alongside Reading FC coaches while making new friends who are also supported by the Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service.

The event was made possible thanks to the team collaboration between Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service, Reading FC, and FA Berks & Bucks. It was led by Charlotte from Reading FC and Craig, the Para Talent Team coach at Brentford—who previously coached the Reading Deaf Football team! They were joined by Berkshire Sensory Consortium Teachers of the Deaf, making it a truly special experience.

From skill-building drills to an action-packed match, pupils got stuck into the game, showcasing incredible talent and teamwork. Those who opted in were connected to the group radio aid, allowing the coaches to seamlessly guide them through the activities. The participation, effort, and skills on display were simply outstanding—what a talented bunch of footballers we have!

We received very positive feedback from the pupils about the event. The pupils shared their favourite parts of the event:

“Playing a match.”

“I liked the match because it was fun and I scored lots of goals.”

“The coaches were really nice.”

“I loved the drills. The staff are really friendly.”

“I really enjoy today. I love it.”

“Shooting.”

“I like the football and I like the football event.”

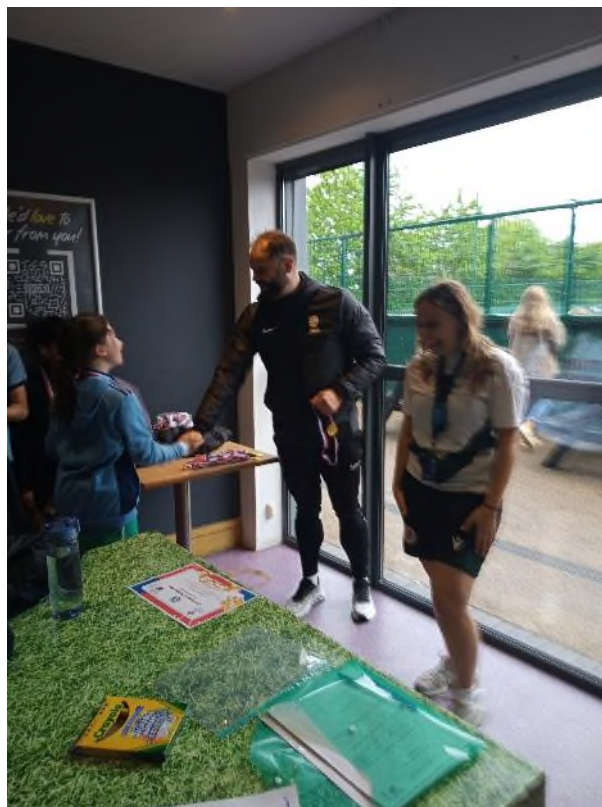
Comments from the Reading FC coaches:

Reading FC Community Trust was honoured to be a part of the recent football event, where children demonstrated incredible enthusiasm, teamwork, and passion for the game. Their hard work and positive attitude truly shone throughout the day, and we couldn't be prouder of

their efforts. It was also fantastic to see such strong support from parents, whose encouragement helped create a positive and memorable experience for all involved. A big thank you to everyone who took part and supported the event!



*67 - The group warming up and practising their football skills.*



*68 - Charlotte receiving her certificate from the coaches.*



69 - Charlotte with her certificate



70 - Affan with his certificate.

## Making Science inclusive– TA Training Success at BSCS



*71 - The image shows two individuals seated at a rectangular wooden table in a room with light-coloured walls and a wooden floor. Both individuals have their faces blurred.*



*72 - A room with ladies sitting around a table watching a presentation from an interactive white board .*

Following the success of our tactile training day earlier this year, BSCS recently hosted a dedicated Science Training Day for Teaching Assistants supporting both our Large Print and Braille users.

The session focused on how best to support students in science lessons, covering lesson preparation, in-class support, practical activities, and the adaptation of equipment and learning resources. From tactile diagrams to accessible lab setups, the emphasis was on making science inclusive and engaging for all learners.

It was a truly collaborative day, made possible by the generous support of our Berkshire schools.

**Piggott School, Highdown School, and Holme Grange School** kindly lent us valuable science resources, helping bring the practical elements of the training to life. We are also extremely grateful to **James Elliman Academy** for kindly hosting our event. A senior science technician from Piggott School joined to share their expertise, adding valuable insights into adapting science for students with vision impairments.

The atmosphere was positive and productive, with everyone contributing ideas, experiences, and strategies. Feedback from the day was overwhelmingly encouraging.

This was a great reminder of what we can achieve when we share knowledge, resources, and a common goal.



*73 - A woman with blonde hair is positioned on the left side of the image, standing near a table. The table is located in the centre-right of the image and is filled with various educational resources and anatomical models. A large anatomical model of the human mouth and throat is prominently displayed. A model of the human heart is visible near the centre of the table. A skeletal model of a human torso is present, showing internal organs. Other items include smaller anatomical models, papers, and miscellaneous objects. The woman is interacting with the items on the table, examining them.*



74 - A group of five women is gathered around a table. The table is in the centre of the image, and the women are positioned closely together, focusing on an object or material on the table. The background includes windows with slanted frames. - The women are engaged in an activity involving a tactile diagram or resource placed on the table. - The woman on the left has dark hair tied back and is wearing a striped top.800.jpg



75 - Lovern, QTVI setting up the Science resources. She is wearing a striped dress and has long hair.



76 - The image depicts a cluttered tabletop filled with various science-related educational materials and equipment. Two large posters are positioned upright at the back of the table. Both posters depict diagrams of stomata, labelled "Stomata CLOSED" and "Stomata OPEN," with detailed illustrations of the cellular structure.



77 - The image shows a Nicoleta a QTVI wearing a red patterned dress. She is holding two colourful objects in her hands, which are 3D images of Cells . Her left hand holds one object, while her right hand holds another, both raised to approximately chest level. In the background, there is a table with various items arranged on it. On the left side of the table, there is a model of a human torso with internal organs visible, positioned upright. Next to it, there is a diagram or educational display featuring anatomical illustrations. Several clear plastic containers, like test tubes and small beakers, are placed in a row on the table.

## Spotlight - Speech and Language Therapy Service



## Children's Speech and Language Online Workshops



All parents and carers of pre school Deaf children are welcome to attend CYPIT Speech and Language Therapy's online parent training session. Each webinar is a one hour event. There are a range of times/days available and no referral is needed- log on and join in, it is fine to have camera off and just listen in/watch, but there is also a Question and Answer function in the chat.

Register on the Berkshire Healthcare website [Children's speech and language therapy workshops](#)

The Topics covered include:

- Communication Foundations
- Communication Building Blocks
- Scaffolding Communication
- Helping with unclear Speech
- Autism and Communication

These sessions are for parents and carers of all children, not specifically for Deaf children, and do not replace specific advice that has already been given to support communication for your child. We have had feedback from families that:

- The sessions support an understanding of the advice given in an assessment session (as parent can concentrate on information in a protected time)
- Where parents are encouraged by progress, but are not sure what in particular is helping, the sessions help families become attuned to what strategies are working well.
- Family members/carers who cannot attend Speech and Language Therapy or Teacher of the Deaf sessions are pleased to be involved in some direct input about ways to help language development .
- Families can make best use of a follow up session with Speech and Language Therapist, with the additional information about speech and language development and ways to help in mind.

We look forward to welcoming you,

Louise Dix, Advanced Speech and Language Therapist for Deaf Children.

Wishing you all a lovely Summer break!



78 - Berkshire Sensory Consortium Team-The image shows a group of individuals identified as the "Berkshire Sensory Consortium Team," as indicated by the text below the photo. The group consists of approximately 30 people standing closely together in rows.

## The Six Authorities





**WOKINGHAM**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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w: [www.berkshiresensoryconsortium.co.uk](http://www.berkshiresensoryconsortium.co.uk)

f: [www.facebook.com/berksscs](https://www.facebook.com/berksscs)

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