

Ulidia

BOY: I like the idea of how different communities work together, and how they can benefit each other in different ways.

EUGENE MARTIN: We wanted inclusivity for everyone in mainstream education, and it would be our job to modify our teaching styles.

GIRL: Ulidia has helped me to accomplish a lot of things.

TEACHER: Good girl, well done!

GIRL: Ulidia has made me really happy.

EUGENE MARTIN: When we set the college up, we set up in 1997, and we very specifically wanted to set up one that had all religions, all genders, all nationalities, that no one would be secluded, no one would be excluded from integrated education, and that included students, statemented students. All schools get some statemented students, but Ulidia took a firm decision right at the very start that we were not going to have a unit.

GILLIAN BONAR: In Ulidia, at Key Stage Three level, we would have a variety of courses that are available for SEN pupils to meet the needs of the curriculum, but also to meet their needs.

RENEE SMITH: We would have 25 percent of our students on the SEN register, and about ten percent of our students would have statements of special educational needs.

REBECCA KELLY: In the morning registration each day it's a good opportunity for me to have a look at the pupils' planners. So, generally, we start off and they put their planners out on the desk, and it gives me the opportunity to see if any teachers have written comments in planners the day before. Also if a parent has any concerns or any issues with anything going on in the school they would communicate that to me via the planner. So it's a good opportunity then for me to see if the parents have, you know, written anything in, and I can get that sorted out in the morning.

In reference to the actual day ahead, registration is an opportunity for me to explain to the pupils if there's going to be any changes. I think this is something that's particularly important for pupils with organisational difficulties or any sort of special educational needs.

RENEE SMITH: Whenever we do the staff training at the start of the year, we sometimes have to invite in medical professionals to talk to the staff about specific needs, specific medical needs that some students may have. They're always very willing to come in and to talk to staff.

We also would then use their care plans and devise protocols with their assistants, and they're all put into protocol folders so that every class teacher will have a set of protocols for all the students with medical needs in their classroom.

NORMA MONTGOMERY: I deal mainly with the special education needs of pupils from Year Eight to Year 12. I deal with Asperger's and behaviour difficulties as well would be another area where we try to socially integrate all our children and to get them involved in PE.

I work with a child in Year Eight, Kelsey, and her needs are wide and varied. We have a storyboard here which actually helps Kelsey to get changed for PE. She's come a very long way from September where she couldn't undo a button. To now, she's able to get changed into her PE kit. The only thing I have to really help her with is her shoes.

CHARLOTTE STEELE: I'm doing double sports studies for my A levels. And to do that, we have to take different lessons, and then like, help Miss Brady in PE like, even get equipment ready before classes.

And, like, if you're outside, obviously there's different pupils with different needs. Especially Kelsey. And like, she can't... If somebody went to throw her the ball, she wouldn't want to catch it. At the start, she didn't even want to get her hands dirty. So, like, we would just take her to the side and pass the ball gently to her, and like, at the start she couldn't even... Like, she wouldn't have dribbled the ball. But now she's got more confidence in herself. I was able to do that.

KYLE LENGHAN: The mentor programme is overseen by the student support officer in the school. And it's whenever we come in to lower sixth, we take over, you know, a wee group of year eights and we help them through to Year Nine. And if they have any issues throughout the school or anything, we're there to help them.

RENEE SMITH: Most of the students in the school are catered for within the mainstream classroom. They have their needs broadly met by differentiation within the classroom. That may be the case where the class teacher has to differentiate work to maybe two, three different levels within a class.

IAIN SHANKS: The way the BTEC science is set up is that they can achieve it at a pass, a merit, or a distinction. So there are some students within the class who are only focusing on the pass activities, whereas there are other students who are maybe moving on to their merits and their distinctions so it makes it easier to differentiate within the class.

GILLIAN BONAR: The vocational courses are perhaps more suited to the SEN pupil because it gives them the opportunity to take part practically in classes and they can be assessed for that.

IAIN SHANKS: With CCEA motor vehicle studies there are three different aspects to the course. There's obviously the learning within the classroom which is examined at the end of the two years. But there's also then the coursework aspect to it as well, and then quite a large percentage is the actual practical riding activity out on the moped which is examined as well at the end of the two years.

It is a subject that is preparing them for life after school. Most of them will go on and get their driving test. Even the practical aspects of owning a car, buying a car, organising insurance, all of that is their learning of skills that they will use later on in life.

GILLIAN BONAR: Some of our SEN pupils then will have withdrawal classes where they will come out for small groups for literacy or numeracy support. Or it could be emotional and behavioural support. But all of those things will ultimately lead to an improved curriculum experience for them.

IAIN SHANKS: We are fortunate to have a good number of learning support assistants within the classroom as well who do, on some occasions, give one on one attention to some of the special educational needs students. But also in the day to day running of the class they will help other students as well and move throughout the classroom to help all the students within the room.

RENEE SMITH: We have a friendship club in the school which runs three days a week, and the students come there just to develop their social skills. Maybe they find that the hustle and bustle of the playground is too much for them and they would prefer to be indoors at lunch, rather than outside.

About seven percent of our students, approximately 40 students in the school, would have autism or Asperger's Syndrome, which is a lot higher than the trend in the population. We feel that we have put provisions in place already in the school which make parents maybe elect to send their students to us because they see that their needs are being met.

GILLIAN BONAR: I would like to think that although we are an integrated school in terms of religion and ability, we are also integrated in that we're allowing the pupils to access the curriculum at every level, which allows our SEN pupils as well as mainstream pupils to access a similar curriculum.

GIRL: Ulidia has made me really happy. English, ICT and Music are my top three favourites along with Ulidia Studies.

BOY: I think Ulidia's a great school, it's really helped me. I used to be very nervous. I could have never talked to a camera before. I couldn't have talked to anybody. But you know, through the school I've been able to come out more, and talk more to people.