

# Case Study:

## Portchester Holiday Club – Supporting Inclusive Holiday Provision

# Background

Mandy Brittan has been running a successful holiday club scheme for the past ten years at Castle Primary School in Portchester. In April 2025, the club relocated to Portchester Community School, which provided the additional space needed to expand our provision and welcome more children from the local area. Portchester Community school is within the catchment area for Castle Primary school. Castle Early Birds has been a HAF provider for the past 4 years with the number of children attending increasing year on year.

## Summer 2025

Mandy was approached by several families of children with additional needs about whether they could attend the holiday club over the summer 2025. Castle Early Birds prides itself on being fully inclusive and working with families to ensure provision is suitable for individual needs. The children requesting holiday club/HAF places for the summer all had significant needs with one child being non-verbal and using a wheelchair, another child also non-verbal and experiencing regular seizures, and the third child receiving a high level of support at school due to struggling with loud noises, experiencing high levels of anxiety, and therefore uses visual communication cards with his carers.

## Delivery

Using Portchester community school provided the opportunity, due to the larger facility, to plan and organise sessions for these children. But it was important to Mandy and the team that the children with additional needs be included in all the activities taking part for the children. All areas, within the school are accessible for wheelchair users.

For example: once a day a group of children went into the cookery room and prepared snacks and lunches. The children with additional needs joined their peers for these activities, whilst funding Hampshire's Short Breaks programme allowed for individual adult support for those that required it. The activities were adapted and rising tables were available so that wheelchair users could join in with the chopping, stirring and baking.

## Working with Families

All parents are asked about their child's SEND needs on the introductory paperwork. Mandy subsequently contacts each to explore and understand those needs further and to plan staffing.

# Case Study Example

This summer the team welcomed a child with special educational needs (SEN) who is wheelchair-bound and non-verbal. To tailor the scheme to his specific requirements, the team reached out to his parents for his Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP). Upon reviewing the EHCP, the parents were engaged in discussions about their child's interests and routines, particularly regarding his toileting needs.

To alleviate any concerns, the parents were invited to the school to explore the accommodation, including a disability-accessible toilet equipped with an electronic bed for changing. The parents expressed anxiety about their child's first experience at a holiday club, so the team emphasised their commitment to ensuring their child felt comfortable and supported.

In response to their feedback, Mandy hired a dedicated one-on-one staff member trained in Makaton to facilitate communication; visual cards to aid interaction were also used. When the child attended for the first time, the parents reported a positive experience, noting that their child was happy, felt safe, and enjoyed the facilities. During his initial visit, it was heartwarming to observe the other children engaging with him in activities like catch. Recognising his love for Play-Doh, the team ensured that it was available and set up a special table for him, encouraging peer interaction.

Additionally, the child participated in team games while in his wheelchair, racing against other children with the assistance of his one-on-one staff member. His joy was evident through his smiles and hand clapping, creating a truly special atmosphere for everyone involved. This experience highlights the importance of inclusivity and tailored support in fostering meaningful interactions among children of all abilities.

## Staffing

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children, qualified staff were employed throughout the four-week summer programme. This included:

- Three one-to-one support staff for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), funded through dedicated inclusion support.
- Three additional staff members to help manage the increased numbers and maintain a high-quality provision.

Through funding from the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme, Castle Early Birds were able to provide 20 fully funded places for children eligible for free school meals. At peak, the club supported 46 children, including these 20 HAF-

funded pupil premium children. The larger premises enabled the provider to run from a safe, stimulating environment that met the needs of all children, including those requiring additional support.

## Activities and Impact

This holiday club/HAF scheme offers a broad and inclusive programme of activities designed to promote confidence, skills, and wellbeing. These include:

- Cookery sessions, where children prepare healthy meals, learn about nutrition, and take-home recipe cards to share with their families.
- Sports, arts, and crafts, helping children to build friendships, stay active, and express their creativity.
- Daily healthy cooked meals, with children encouraged to participate in preparation and cooking.

It has been particularly rewarding for the team to see how many children experience cooking for the first time at the club. The skills and confidence they gain extend beyond the sessions, with many proudly sharing what they have made with their families.

## Future Plans

Following the success of the summer programme, the plan is to:

- Extend the club to six weeks over the summer and two weeks at Easter to meet growing demand.
- Continue to prioritise inclusive provision, supporting children with additional needs, pupil premium, and HAF-funded children. This can only continue with Government grant funding.
- Develop the club as a community hub in Portchester, a place where all children feel safe, valued, and supported.

## Summary

The Portchester Holiday Club demonstrates how high-quality, inclusive holiday provision can make a real difference to families and children in the local community. Through the support of the HAF Programme, creative activities, healthy meals, and caring staff, it provides a space where every child, regardless of ability or background, can learn, play, and thrive.