

## **Mrs McConnell Smith – Assistant Head – Inclusion**

### **Links in the wider community – September 2021**

The changes within SEND have been many and varied over the last few years. We believe it is really important for a school to be aware of and involved in developments as they are happening to secure the best possible future for all our children and families with SEND.

The InCo works across both Whitehill and Highbury Schools dividing her time flexibly when needed.

She attends panels for the LHNF (Local High Needs Funding) decisions. She co-chairs the Hitchin SENCo focus group (SOS or Save Our SENCos) which includes all our Hitchin primary and secondary schools and works on a self-supporting and educating model.

Attending the local termly North Herts DSPL 1 “SENCO forums” allows her to stay in touch with current thinking and developments on a local and national level. She attends the “wellbeing leads” forums to this same end.

She has trained and delivered in many things such as mental health and wellbeing (MHFA), attachment and trauma, crisis and sad events, autism (AET level 3 training and train the trainer) speech and language (ELKLAN) and is also a level 5 SpLd (dyslexia) trained tutor.

She is a member of the local PATOSS committee. (Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties) and plans CPD training for specialist teachers locally.

The InCo has been asked to support other schools in the area with their SEN provision and understanding with visits and INSET and was seconded to cover for another school who were without a SENCo. She has spoken at a National conference about inclusion.

She has also been invited to contribute to and comment on some of the work being done around SEN by the local authority such as around autism provision, the EP service, changes to Exceptional Needs Funding (ENF/HNF) “banding” and the school offer, allowing her to play an active part in future developments.

