

Cleaswell Hill School



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School Evaluation Form

Our self-evaluation brings together pupil-level, pathway and whole-school evidence to understand what is working, where outcomes or practice vary and what leaders need to improve, always in the context of pupils' assessed needs.

Section 1 - Contents

Section	Leads	Updated	Quality Assured (Recent)
1. School Context	Mike Jackson	September 26	SIP / Experienced education professional with wide-ranging cross-school quality assurance experience - June / September 26
2. Overall Effectiveness	Mike Jackson	September 26	SIP / Experienced education professional with wide-ranging cross-school quality assurance experience - June / September 26
3. Safeguarding	Helen McIntyre / Rachael Ford-Hutchinson	September 26	SIP / Experienced education professional with wide-ranging cross-school quality assurance experience - June / September 26
4. Inclusion	Emma Dunn	September 26	SIP / Experienced education professional with wide-ranging cross-school quality assurance experience - June / September 26
5. Curriculum and Teaching	Patrick Ford-Hutchinson	September 26	SIP / Experienced education professional with wide-ranging cross-school quality assurance experience - June / September 26
6. Achievement	Jamie Wheadon / Patrick Ford-Hutchinson	September 26	SIP / Experienced education professional with wide-ranging cross-school quality assurance experience - June / September 26
7. Attendance and Behaviour	Julie Brown / Juliet Ruddick	September 26	SIP / Experienced education professional with wide-ranging cross-school quality assurance experience - June / September 26
8. Personal Development and Wellbeing	Rachael Ford-Hutchinson (Jenny Smith)	September 26	SIP / Experienced education professional with wide-ranging cross-school quality assurance experience - June / September 26
Early Years	N/A	N/A	N/A
9. Post 16	Charlotte Calcutt / Sophie Smith	September 26	SIP / Experienced education professional with wide-ranging cross-school quality assurance experience - June / September 26
10. Leadership and Governance	Mike Jackson	September 26	SIP / Experienced education professional with wide-ranging cross-school quality assurance experience - June / September 26

Section 1 – School Context

School Evaluation Processes

Self-evaluation is rigorous, evidence-led and securely embedded within Cleaswell Hill's improvement cycle. Leaders triangulate achievement and EHCP/PLIM outcomes, curriculum and teaching evidence, safeguarding, attendance and behaviour, therapy, pupil and family experience, staff feedback, governor scrutiny, SIP challenge and external quality assurance to maintain an accurate understanding of strengths, variation and priorities. This enables leaders to identify underlying barriers rather than respond only to headline outcomes. As Northumberland's designated Neuroinclusive Education Network (NEN) provider, Cleaswell Hill also evaluates the impact of its county-wide professional development offer, testing both its influence on practice beyond the school and the learning brought back to strengthen provision for its own pupils. NEN delivery is subject to systematic evaluation and quality assurance, with findings informing future delivery, strategic planning and continuous improvement.

Evaluation translates directly into the Five-Year Strategic Plan, annual Horizon and detailed implementation plans, with priorities informing professional learning, appraisal, staffing, resources, therapy and governance. Leaders and governors test whether actions are improving pupils' experiences and outcomes through data analysis, learning walks, curriculum conversations, moderation and comparative judgement, pupil-level case sampling and stakeholder feedback. Professional conversations and distributed leadership give staff and governors meaningful opportunities to contribute to change, while implementation plans make responsibility and intended impact explicit. Findings continually refine the SEF and subsequent planning cycle. Successive improvement cycles demonstrate that priorities are identified early, acted on and evaluated, supporting sustained high standards and ensuring that significant areas for improvement are recognised and addressed.

School Context - Responsible Body and Governance Structure

Maintained School Governance and Accountability

Northumberland County Council – Maintaining Local Authority

- Maintains Cleaswell Hill as a community special school and fulfils its statutory responsibilities as the local authority.
- Works with the school and Governing Body in relation to SEND sufficiency and placements, funding, staffing, premises and wider statutory responsibilities.
- Provides local-authority services, professional partnership and external challenge, including School Improvement Partner support.

Governing Body – Cleaswell Hill School

Chair of Governors: Tim Chrisp

- Sets and sustains the school's vision, ethos and strategic direction in partnership with school leaders.
- Holds the Headteacher to account for the quality and impact of education, safeguarding and pupils' achievement, inclusion, wellbeing and preparation for adulthood.
- Provides informed support and robust challenge through FGB and committee scrutiny, link-governor monitoring, pupil and cohort evidence, SIP reports and external quality assurance.
- Oversees finance, staffing and resources, including digital and assistive technologies, and assures itself that statutory duties are met and that leaders give appropriate consideration to staff capacity, workload and wellbeing.

- Tests the accuracy of leaders' self-evaluation and whether improvement priorities and professional learning are having the intended impact on pupils, particularly those facing the greatest barriers.

Headteacher – Cleaswell Hill School

Headteacher: Mike Jackson

- Is responsible for the strategic and day-to-day leadership and management of the school and for implementing the strategic direction agreed with governors.
- Leads self-evaluation and improvement across curriculum and teaching, achievement, inclusion, safeguarding, attendance and behaviour, personal development, Post-16 and the wider operation of the school.
- Ensures staffing, resources, professional development and specialist provision are organised around pupils' assessed educational, therapeutic, communication, sensory, physical and medical needs.
- Is accountable to the Governing Body and works closely with Northumberland County Council and statutory, health, social-care and wider professional partners.

Previous Inspection and Current Evaluation

Cleaswell Hill was judged Outstanding in all areas at its most recent full inspection in June 2022, with no areas for improvement identified. Leaders do not rely on this historic judgement when evaluating current provision. The school has re-evaluated its work against the September 2026 inspection toolkit, taking account of significant changes in pupil numbers and complexity, curriculum pathways, integrated therapy, Post-16 provision, staffing, leadership and further development of the Fusion Learning Hub. Current judgements are based on the impact and typicality of present provision, sustained evidence over time and independent challenge rather than the previous inspection grade; this includes SIP scrutiny across 2025/26 and the June 2026 SIP-led external review involving an experienced external education professional with wide-ranging cross-school quality-assurance experience.

Pupil Context

Cleaswell Hill is a maintained community special school with a designated age range of 2 to 19. As at September 2026, 255 pupils are on roll and all have an Education, Health and Care Plan. There are currently no pupils in Early Years, so the Early Years evaluation area does not apply.

Pupils have a wide range of complex and frequently overlapping needs affecting cognition and learning, communication and interaction, sensory and physical development, emotional regulation, health, independence and preparation for adulthood. Because SEND is universal across the cohort, leaders scrutinise the additional barriers within this population, including disadvantage, current or previous social-care involvement, attendance, medical and mental-health needs, communication, family circumstances and other vulnerabilities such as young caring responsibilities where identified.

The school is organised through three vertical, through-school pathways—Engagement, Core and Extended—alongside chronological phases. Post-16 provision operates across the main school and Appleby Centre under the same URN. Clear pathway rationales establish different but equally ambitious curriculum, pedagogical and assessment approaches according to pupils' starting points and learning profiles. This enables provision to change responsively as pupils' needs develop while maintaining ambition for curriculum achievement, communication, regulation, independence and future destinations.

The school operates at or around its published capacity of 261 places. Rising demand and increasing complexity make the strategic deployment of staffing, therapy, resources and physical

space important contextual considerations, with admissions and capacity reviewed alongside pupils' entitlement to safe, high-quality specialist provision.

The table below provides a live overview of the school's cohort by pathway, phase and key pupil groups, enabling leaders to identify patterns of need, disadvantage and vulnerability and to target provision, resources and support with precision. Percentages within pathway columns should be calculated against the relevant pathway population; vulnerability groups overlap and should not be totalled.

Cohort Overview – 10.9.26				
	Whole School	Engagement	Core	Extended
Total	255	58(23%)	104 (41%)	93(36%)
EYFS	0(0%)	0(0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)
KS1	9(4%)	5(9%)	4 (4%)	0(0%)
KS2	61(24%)	21(36%)	29(28%)	11(12%)
KS3	101(40%)	16(28%)	39(38%)	46(49%)
KS4	58(23%)	10(17%)	17 (16%)	31 (33%)
Post 16	26(10%)	6(10%)	15 (14%)	5 (5%)
Boys	188(74%)	44(76%)	72 (69%)	72 (77%)
Girls	67(26%)	14(24%)	32 (31%)	21 (23%)
FSM	143(56%)	31(53%)	58 (56%)	54(58%)
PP	115(45%)	22(38%)	47 (45%)	46(49%)
LAC /PLAC	7(3%)	3(5%)	2 (2%)	2(2%)
Social Care	71(28%)	31(53%)	29(28%)	11(12%)

The September 2026 IDSR provides an externally validated picture of primary SEND need based on the January 2026 census. At that point, all 261 pupils had EHC plans. Primary needs included autistic spectrum disorder (120 pupils), speech, language and communication needs (68), social, emotional and mental health needs (26), moderate learning difficulties (14), physical disability (10), specific learning difficulties (6), severe learning difficulties (6), profound and multiple learning difficulties (5), other difficulty/disability (4) and hearing impairment (2). Leaders recognise that primary-need classifications do not fully represent the complexity of individual pupils and therefore plan from the whole EHCP and assessed profile rather than diagnosis alone.

Leaders track destinations beyond the point of leaving, with annual follow-up used to evaluate placement suitability and stability and to refine Preparation for Adulthood and transition planning. School destination tracking records 100% of 2025/26 leavers entering positive onward destinations.

Destinations – July 26					
Total	CHS Post 16	College	Social Care	Other School	NEET
47	26 (55%)	15 (32%)	6 (13%)	0	0
Destinations – July 27 [Proposed]					
Total	CHS Post 16	College	Social Care	Other School	NEET
57	34 (60%)	15 (26%)	8 (14%)	0	0

Attendance remains above the latest published DfE state-funded special-school comparator used by leaders (87.1%) throughout 2025/26, while persistent absence reduced across the year to below the corresponding 35.8% comparator. These are external DfE comparators rather than IDSR comparison measures, as the IDSR does not provide national attendance bandings for special schools.

Attendance and Behaviour - Summer Term 2026				
Attendance	% of PA	% of SA	RPI	Incidents
89.7%	33.1%	4.1%	49	488

Detailed pupil, pathway and vulnerable-group analysis is set out in the Attendance and Behaviour section.

Local Context

Cleaswell Hill is located in Choppington, South-East Northumberland. Although pupils travel from a wider geographical area because of the specialist nature of the provision, more than 90% live within South-East Northumberland. The social, economic, health and SEND context of the locality therefore has an important influence on the barriers experienced by pupils and families and on the way leaders design and evaluate provision.

The school's immediate neighbourhood, Northumberland 017C, is among the most deprived nationally. Under the 2025 Index of Multiple Deprivation, 89% of neighbourhoods nationally and 88% of neighbourhoods within Northumberland are less deprived than the area in which the school is located. Health and disability deprivation is particularly significant, with only 5% of neighbourhoods nationally experiencing greater deprivation on this measure; education and skills deprivation is also high within the local authority. This context is particularly relevant to Cleaswell Hill because pupils already experience significant and frequently overlapping SEND, health, communication, sensory, physical and developmental needs, meaning that socio-economic disadvantage can compound existing barriers to participation, attendance, achievement, wellbeing and preparation for adulthood.

The September 2026 IDSR independently corroborates this context: Cleaswell Hill's school-location deprivation is categorised as 'well above average', 50.62% of pupils were FSM6 in the January 2026 census and 100% had EHC plans.

Leaders do not assume that neighbourhood-level deprivation describes the circumstances of every pupil or family. Contextual information is therefore triangulated with pupil-level evidence including Pupil Premium and FSM eligibility, current or previous social-care involvement, attendance, medical and mental-health needs, prior educational experience, communication, family circumstances and other identified vulnerabilities. This enables leaders to understand where disadvantage or wider contextual factors intersect with SEND and to respond to the actual barriers experienced by individual pupils rather than treating disadvantaged pupils as a single homogeneous group. The implications are reflected throughout the school's provision: early communication and foundational learning, personalised attendance support, integrated therapy, family partnership, accessible enrichment, independence, careers and Preparation for Adulthood are prioritised because they directly address identified barriers. Disadvantage is treated as a barrier to remove, not a reason to lower expectations.

The wider Northumberland SEND system is also an important part of the school's context. The February 2026 Area SEND inspection found that local arrangements led to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The inspection identified variability in the quality and impact of some EHC plans and in communication between education, health and social-care agencies, alongside continuing pressures associated with access to specialist provision and services. It also recognised strong working relationships between special schools and health and social-care professionals and the positive contribution these make to multi-agency planning. Cleaswell Hill takes account of both the strengths and identified vulnerabilities within this wider system when evaluating its own provision. Leaders seek

to mitigate potential barriers through rigorous EHCP and PLIM quality assurance, integrated therapeutic practice, effective information sharing and multi-agency case review, close partnership with families, careful oversight of pupils receiving provision away from the school site and highly personalised transition and Preparation for Adulthood planning.

Cleaswell Hill also contributes actively to improvement within this wider local system rather than operating in isolation from it. Through collaboration with Northumberland County Council, health and social-care professionals, Fusion Learning Hub, NEN, universities and partner schools, leaders share specialist SEND expertise while bringing external learning back into the school. This reciprocal work strengthens provision for Cleaswell Hill pupils and contributes to the school's wider ambition to improve inclusion and outcomes for children and young people with SEND across Northumberland and beyond.

Supporting evidence: English Indices of Deprivation 2025 analysis; Pupil Premium Strategy; Inclusion Strategy; February 2026 Northumberland Area SEND inspection; EHCP/PLIM quality-assurance evidence; multi-agency case sampling; Fusion/NEN and local-authority partnership evidence.

Staffing Context

Staffing information is current as of 17 September 2026.

Total workforce: 183 staff

Teachers: 35

Teaching support staff: 107, comprising 7 HLTAs and 100 Teaching Assistants/Cover Supervisors, including 3 fixed-term and 5 bank employees

Integrated Therapy Team: 15 staff, including SaLT, OT and other therapy professionals

Other support staff: 26, comprising 14 support staff, 3 kitchen staff and 9 cleaning staff

Senior Leadership Team: 1 Headteacher, 2 Deputy Headteacher(s) and 2 Assistant Headteacher(s)

Current vacancies: 4 Teaching Assistant posts, No teaching vacancies are currently identified.

Staff absence — 1 September to 17 September 2026:

Overall staff absence was 4.76% of available working days across the 13 working-day period.

Teachers: 2.42% — 11 days, including 9 days of compassionate leave

Teaching Assistants and Cover Supervisors: 4.15% — 54 days

Cleaning staff: 11.11% — 13 days

Kitchen staff: 33.33% — 13 days

Absence percentages are calculated against available working days between 1 and 17 September 2026.

Staffing and deployment are reviewed against pupil numbers, assessed complexity, pathway requirements, safeguarding, medical needs and integrated therapy provision. Leaders monitor capacity, vacancies and absence so that changes do not compromise pupils' safety, continuity of provision or access to ambitious learning. Professional development, coaching, supervision and appraisal are aligned closely with the school's improvement priorities and changing pupil needs.

Removing Barriers and Securing Strong Outcomes

This high-level overview explains how leaders translate contextual understanding into action. Detailed evaluation and evidence sit within the relevant SEF sections and are not duplicated here.

Leaders have a forensic understanding of how SEND, deprivation, social-care involvement, disrupted prior education, health, attendance, communication, sensory regulation and family

circumstances can combine to create additional barriers. Pupil-level assessment, contextual information and family/professional insight are used to identify barriers early, target support and evaluate whether action improves achievement, attendance, participation, wellbeing and preparation for adulthood. Context drives provision rather than lowering expectations.

The impact is evident across multiple measures. Curriculum target achievement increased from 70.8% in autumn 2024 to 77% in spring 2026; whole-school PLIM achievement reached 80.7%, while Pupil Premium pupils achieved 81% of PLIM targets compared with 79% for non-Pupil Premium pupils. Attendance remained above the national state-funded special-school comparator throughout 2025/26; persistent absence reduced to 33.1%; termly recorded incidents reduced from 844 to 488 and restrictive physical interventions from 106 to 49; and 100% of 2024/25 leavers secured positive onward destinations. Summer 2026 SIP-led case sampling traced the longitudinal journey of a looked-after pupil from baseline through attainment, progress, attendance and assessed need. The triangulated evidence demonstrated significant progress from the pupil's starting point, providing independent validation that leaders identify intersecting barriers accurately, adapt provision appropriately and test whether support is improving outcomes over time. Taken together, this evidence demonstrates that, despite significant complexity and additional barriers, pupils are increasingly enabled to achieve, belong and thrive from their individual starting points.

Stakeholder and external evidence validates leaders' evaluation. March 2026 Parent View received 33 responses, with 100% of respondents stating that they would recommend Cleaswell Hill to another parent. SIP scrutiny across 2025/26, including SIP-led external QA in June 2026 involving an experienced education professional with wide-ranging cross-school quality-assurance experience, confirms strong teaching, relational practice, integrated therapy, inclusion and leadership.

Inclusive Teaching, Assessment and Targeted Support

High-quality adaptive teaching and precise assessment are the principal means through which barriers are reduced. EHCP/PLIM priorities, curriculum assessment, therapy evidence, pupil response, attendance, behaviour and family insight are considered together so staff understand the whole pupil rather than responding to diagnosis alone. Reasonable adjustments, personalised communication, assistive technology and specialist intervention enable pupils to access ambitious learning while developing communication, regulation, participation and independence.

Where assessment identifies gaps, structured intervention in communication, early language, reading, phonics and mathematics is targeted and reviewed for impact. Leaders analyse progress by pathway and pupil group, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils known or previously known to social care, and adapt teaching, intervention or specialist support where progress is weaker. Staff expertise is strengthened through coaching, collaborative planning, practitioner enquiry and specialist therapy input; external SIP scrutiny confirms high expectations, highly adaptive teaching and deeply embedded knowledge of pupils. Leaders test the impact of this provision through termly foundational-learning assessment, progress review and pupil-level analysis, with detailed phonics, spelling and literacy outcomes evaluated within Curriculum and Teaching and Achievement rather than duplicated here.

Attendance, Safeguarding, Pastoral and Wellbeing

Attendance, safeguarding, behaviour and wellbeing are considered together as inclusion and achievement priorities. Leaders analyse attendance and presentation alongside SEND,

communication, regulation, health, social-care and family information so that intervention addresses underlying barriers rather than absence or behaviour alone. First-day response, personalised attendance plans, home visits, EWO support and coordinated work with Early Help, health, social care and the local authority are used proportionately; part-time timetables receive additional oversight, regular review and multi-agency involvement with the aim of increasing access where this is safe and appropriate.

Preventative pastoral support combines relational, trauma-informed and regulation-aware practice, predictable routines, accessible communication, safe spaces, mental-health support and practical family assistance. Pupils are supported to recognise, express and manage need with increasing independence and to return to learning more successfully. Leaders triangulate attendance, safeguarding, therapy, behaviour, pupil/family voice and case sampling before judging impact, rather than relying on headline data alone.

Partnership with Families and Multi-Agency Working

Partnership with families is a sustained strength and directly informs provision. Parents and carers contribute to EHCP/PLIM priorities, attendance and behaviour planning, transition, safeguarding and therapeutic support. The Family Partner role extends this established provision for families facing additional barriers, helping them navigate services, access practical support and maintain consistent approaches between home and school.

School staff and therapists work closely with health, social care, Early Help, EWO, the local authority and other specialists so that assessment and support are coordinated rather than fragmented. Leaders evaluate partnership through pupil outcomes, attendance, case sampling and family feedback rather than activity alone; Parent View and SIP discussion provide independent evidence of very high parental confidence.

Integrated Therapy

Integrated therapy is a distinctive strength because therapeutic expertise is embedded within curriculum, teaching, assessment and everyday provision rather than operating as a separate intervention service. Therapy assessment informs EHCP/PLIM priorities, communication systems, sensory and physical access, regulation, written output, independence and pathway planning.

Therapists work alongside teachers, support staff, families and external professionals to identify barriers and embed strategies throughout pupils' daily experience. Targeted communication, sensory, motor, regulation and independence programmes are reviewed for their effect on curriculum access and reduced dependency, while specialist coaching builds staff capability so effective approaches are sustained beyond individual therapy sessions.

This model is particularly effective for pupils with the most complex profiles, enabling stronger communication, regulation, participation and access to ambitious learning. Summer 2026 SIP scrutiny identified compelling evidence that integrated therapy reduces barriers to learning and strongly supports the school's evaluation of inclusion as an exceptional feature. Governors and leaders test impact through therapy assessment, EHCP/PLIM progress, attendance and behaviour evidence, pupil-level case sampling and placement stability.

Enrichment, Community Participation and Preparation for Adulthood

Enrichment is deliberately designed so disadvantage, communication, physical or sensory need and family circumstances do not restrict pupils' access to wider experiences. Grant funding,

subsidised activities, community partnerships and appropriate adaptations remove financial and practical barriers. Daily lunchtime clubs provide structured opportunities for communication, social interaction, play and regulation; a four-day after-school offer extends participation across all three pathways; and holiday-club provision provides continued structure and engagement outside term time.

Enrichment Passports, aligned with DfE guidance, and participation records enable leaders to test equality of access rather than assume that an inclusive offer is equally accessible. Community learning, work-related experiences and preparation for adulthood develop confidence, independence, communication, cultural capital and participation in adult life. Collaboration with Tyne and Wear Museums has also produced access passports that widen pupils' access to cultural venues while strengthening partners' understanding of complex SEND.

Overall Impact of Removing Barriers

Taken together, these approaches demonstrate that Cleaswell Hill uses its detailed understanding of context to remove barriers rather than explain them. Leaders triangulate achievement, attendance and behaviour, safeguarding, therapy, destinations, pupil and family experience, governor scrutiny and external quality assurance to establish whether provision is changing outcomes from individual starting points. Detailed evidence is evaluated in the relevant SEF sections; collectively, it demonstrates that disadvantaged pupils, pupils known or previously known to social care and pupils facing significant complexity or other barriers are enabled to achieve, belong and thrive. The school's outward-facing civic and system leadership is evaluated separately in Leadership and Governance to avoid duplication.