



# SPOTLIGHT ON EXCELLENCE

## CELEBRATING KEY WORKERS ACROSS OUR TRUST

**Welcome back to our third edition of Spotlight.** Across our Trust, the keyworker model plays an important role in supporting pupils' wellbeing, learning, and sense of belonging. It sits within the wider Liberty Academy Trust Quality of Life (QoL) Framework, a strengths-based model designed to support the positive development of the whole child. The QoL Framework reflects our commitment to meeting every pupil's academic, social, emotional, and wider life-needs, and recognises that co-production with families is central to how we define success and plan support. The framework helps our schools focus on what enables pupils to have a positive quality of life both now and in the future.



Within this model, key working is one important element – particularly within the Personal Support domain, where ensuring that each student has access to a skilled, consistent, and trusted adult is fundamental. However, it is essential that staff understand that key working is just one part of QoL, sitting alongside curriculum design, communication development, assessment, therapeutic input, safeguarding, and wider whole-school systems that promote wellbeing, autonomy, and belonging.

By placing key working within this broader framework, we ensure that our work is aligned with a shared, Trust-wide understanding of what Quality of Life means for autistic young people, and how every member of staff contributes to it.

We are also proud to have an established relationship with Swalcliffe Park School, whose staff have shared their highly effective keyworker model with us, strengthening our practice across the Trust.

While each school has many outstanding keyworkers, this edition highlights a small selection of recent stories to inspire colleagues. We warmly welcome more examples from staff across all schools for future editions.

## Church Lawton School – Whole-School Consistency & Compassionate Support

At Church Lawton School, every member of staff contributes to the keyworker model, creating a culture of strong relationships, personalised interventions, and ongoing communication with families. This whole-team approach ensures consistency, emotional safety, and responsive support that adapts to the needs of each pupil. A recent illustration of this practice can be seen in the work of Emma Castle and Hannah Lawson, who support two pupils with complex needs through steady, relational, strengths-based approaches. They maintain positive, regular communication with families and use personalised methods such as sensory diets, structured routines, behaviour supports, and daily check-ins. One pupil with significant anxiety, sensory needs, and health challenges has been supported through major transitions, and a gradual, carefully planned reintegration into school. Their work reflects the wider culture of Church Lawton School, where every staff member contributes to an emotionally safe, relational, and family-centred approach.

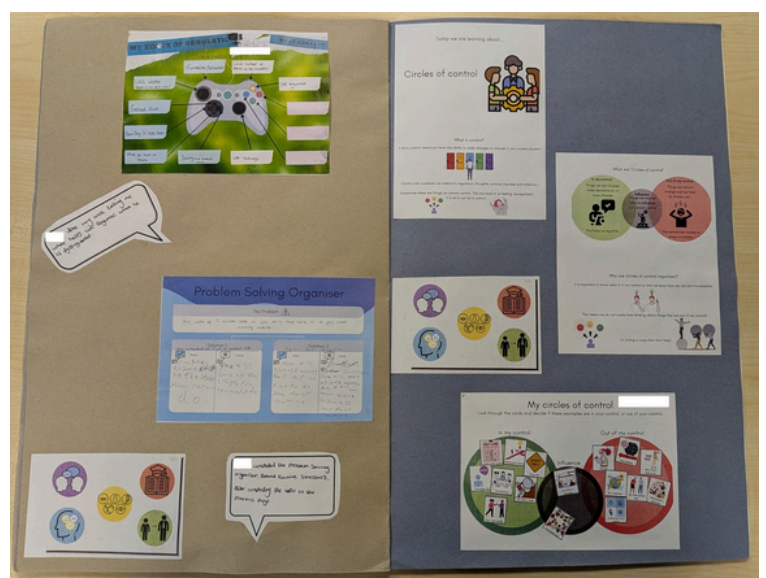
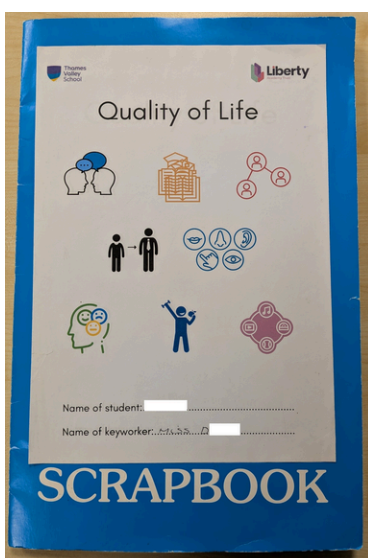


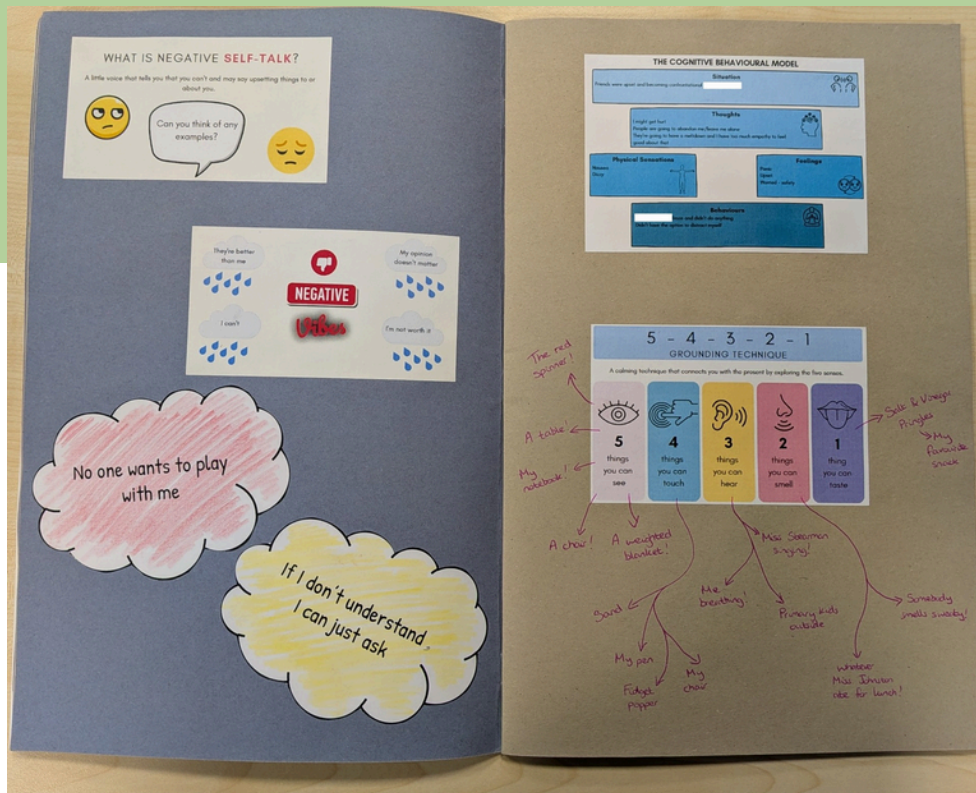
# Thames Valley School – Personalised Transitions & Adaptable Practice

At Thames Valley School, the keyworker model is embedded as a whole school, collaborative approach designed to support the quality of life and individual needs of pupils. The keyworker model is coordinated by Chrissie Johnston, but its implementation is driven collectively by the therapy team, research associates and dedicated learning mentors. Transitions for new pupils are supported through shared processes, including documentation review, family meetings, and team-based discussions to ensure an appropriate and thoughtful keyworker match. The therapy team then plays a central role in enabling high quality key working, providing ongoing opportunities for staff to consult, seek guidance, and access resources. Together, they have developed an extensive bank of resources across each of the eight Quality of Life domains, giving keyworkers a practical starting point for planning and shaping their sessions. A distinctive feature of the Thames Valley approach is the use of keyworker scrapbooks, which capture experiences and progress. See some examples below. The model is intentionally flexible so that support can adapt fluidly to the preferences, needs, and priorities of each young person.

As part of the Trust's commitment to evidence informed practice, Chrissie leads the publication of the 'Research to Reality' newsletter. This includes the current 'keyworker series' which explores each of the eight domains of the Quality-of-Life framework, translating research into practice across our schools. Research associates have also begun contributing case studies that highlight examples of strong key working practice across the Trust, providing inspiration and ideas for colleagues.

Through this collective effort, Thames Valley School continues to foster a thoughtful, relational, and person-centred culture of key working, one shaped not by any single individual, but by the shared expertise and values of the whole school community.





## Vanguard School – Emotional Growth & Developing Independence

At Vanguard School, the keyworker model prioritises emotional regulation, resilience, and growing independence. A powerful recent example can be seen in the work of Gulzira Shamyrbekova, who supports a pupil experiencing significant challenges with shutdowns, transitions, and confidence.

Through predictable routines, calm co-regulation, and steady encouragement, Gulzira helped the student remain in school during moments of distress and gradually develop belief in their ability to cope. She has supported the pupil in daily routines, real-life independence skills such as visiting local shops, and building a wider network of trusted adults. Close collaboration with the SENCo, psychologists, CAMHS, and medical teams has been central to the progress made. The pupil's improved stability, self-awareness, and independence reflects Vanguard's trauma-informed and relationship-centred approach.

## A Shared Vision Across the Trust

Across Church Lawton School, Thames Valley School, and Vanguard School, keyworkers demonstrate a commitment to strong, trusting relationships; compassionate consistency; personalised and flexible support; effective collaboration with families and external professionals; and the celebration of every step of progress. Their work sits within our wider Quality of Life framework and reflects the shared aspiration that every young person should be known, understood, and supported by a trusted adult who champions their growth.

We know there are many more examples of exceptional keyworker practice across the Trust, and we would love to hear additional stories to celebrate in future editions.

### Coming Soon

**Stay tuned for the next edition of Spotlight on Excellence, where we continue to celebrate the incredible work happening across our trust. If you have something you wish to feature in a spotlight, please get in touch.**

