

APPRENTICESHIP CASE STUDY



**Siobhan
Howdle**

Teaching Assistant

Siobhan was a mum of five, in her mid-forties, who felt her life was not going forward and wanted to help her children with their homework. She found learning at school very hard work as a child, as she struggled to concentrate and was easily distracted. Siobhan had to overcome the barrier of returning to studying, as she was not very confident, and couldn't face college. By her own admission she was not computer literate but overcame this by working towards Functional Skills 2 in ICT, Maths and English during the course.

Siobhan worked towards the Level 3 Diploma in Specialist Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools with Darlington Borough Council Learning & Skills. She stated she learnt so much on the course including Children's behaviour, emotional and social needs, School organisation, Safeguarding, Equality and diversity, Children's health and safety, plus much more. Siobhan developed her ICT skills to enable her to complete the course using the online portal with very little effort once the tutor had demonstrated its use. Siobhan benefitted from the immediate response from her tutor if a problem arose or feedback from work submitted. Working towards the apprenticeship meant being paid to study while working in a school environment to put the theory into practice. She stated the main benefit from the course was learning a different approach in teaching children with disabilities, as she had a keen interest in working with disabled children.

If Siobhan had not started this course, she would not have been able to follow her dream of working with children in the school environment. She was already completing some voluntary reading at the school before deciding she wanted to go further into working as a Teaching Assistant. On completion of the course Siobhan was offered a full-time position at St Teresa's Primary as a Teaching Assistant, stating she has loved every minute of it, gained so much more confidence and making a close family of friends. She conducted group sessions and 1:1s with disabled children, including those with autism, some in wheelchairs and other learning / physical disabilities.

Since completing the course it has given Siobhan the confidence to go forward and complete more level 2 courses, including: Common Health Conditions in Children, Understanding Autism, Understanding Mental Health in Children and Understanding Behaviour in Children. The apprenticeship experience has given Siobhan the drive to take her studies further and she now wishes to start a biology course.



TEES VALLEY MAYOR

