



*Celebrating 25 years of Playscheme service*



**Playscheme Report**  
Summer 2019

## The 25th Enable Ability Playscheme celebration.

In 1995 the charity (then known as the Portsmouth and District Cerebral Palsy Association) held its first Playscheme at East Shore School, a former special needs facilities for children with severe learning difficulties, located on Eastern Way, Portsmouth.

Roll forward twenty-four years to 2019 where the Playscheme now welcomes over 50 children with high needs supported by over 60 staff on every day of its programme in the school summer break. This presents a huge logistical and organisational effort by the staff at the offices in Copnor when transport is also involved but you will see from the pictures later in this report that this is more than amply rewarded by our young people with the biggest smiles you could wish for.

The Playscheme is now Enable Ability's flagship service and funded by Portsmouth City Council as it was in 1995, although their contribution today is significantly more than the £2000 they committed to the project at its inception.

Over the years many of our sessional support staff have stayed with us, some have become senior team members and some have taken permanent roles in the charity. For those who moved into other employment all tell us that working in the Specialist Playscheme changed their attitude to disability in the workplace whilst others tell us that it helped guide their decisions, through further education, towards a career. Some of their stories can be found later in this report.



*Pictured above attending the 25th party are current and ex senior staff (and Hollie):*

*Back row: Natalie Richardson, Julie Nethercote, Mark Wiltshire, Danni Dean, Charlotte Bleach, Michelle Morgan, Christian Pearson, Jaime Lee Knight, John Pitt.*

*Front row: Hollie Munro, Katie Louise Miles-Williams, Sebastian Olway, Jacqui Munro*

## The First Playscheme - a little history.

The first Portsmouth Special Needs Playscheme ran from 24th July to 11th August 1995 and was set up in response to needs expressed the previous year based on the success of similar schemes in Gosport (Let Us Play Scheme) and Waterlooville (Anders House Holiday Playscheme). Richard Soutar, now the Enable Ability Manager, was the Special Needs Coordinator at the time.

A meeting involving various statutory and voluntary sector organisations was held in October 1994 which saw the forming of a Working Group, chaired by Peter Howlett, the charity manager then, with the mission of establishing the requirements and likely costs of setting up a Special Needs Playscheme in Portsmouth. An Open Meeting was convened at the Pendragon Hotel, Southsea on 30th March 1995 for parents and carers of children with special needs to allow them to ask questions and for the working group to fully understand requirements.

Although there were initially some problems with attracting enrolments from parents the Playscheme ran and overall 36 children with special needs attended during the period. These were supported by 13 paid staff and 15 volunteers (including 5 bus drivers). The scheme saw two outings for the children to Staunton Country Park and the Sea Life Centre

The overall cost of providing the service over nearly three weeks was £14,323 funded partly by Portsmouth City Council, The Tudor Trust and ultimately the Community Initiatives Fund. A 70-page document was produced to report on the success of the programme and to help it seek further support the following year, which it achieved.

### **Coming home too clean!!**

Something which we do every year now for our Playschemes is to seek the views of parents/carers to ensure we are meeting their needs correctly. The major feedback from this process in 1995 was that parents/carers felt that the children were coming home too clean!!

## The Playscheme in 2002 - stills from a video.



## Staff Stories.....

**Richard Soutar**



I clearly recall a lengthy period of consultation, multi-agency meetings and extensive preparation work during the lead up to what proved to be a very successful pilot playscheme at East Shore School back in 1995. I'm quite sure that, 24 years on, the senior staff team wouldn't hesitate in saying 'What's changed?!' Whilst it is unquestionably the level of provision together with the sheer numbers of children attending that has changed the most, the charity can happily reflect on having delivered an excellent service for families of the highest needs children in the city for a quarter of a century. The playscheme has consistently been identified by parents as the most important respite service that they receive and we will do all that we can to ensure its continuity into the future.

In 2002 I applied for the role of play worker/ driver for the summer playscheme being held in Futchers School . This job was going to be a stop gap before I went back into working into school or nurseries. After working the summer I decided to start at the new Saturday Club that Enable Ability had just started. I found the job so satisfying , that I kept working alongside my other job . Over the years I become deputy then senior at Playscheme and 2 years ago I stepped up to team leader of the Specialist Playscheme . I have seen many changes over my time, the biggest one being the number of young people we cater for now. When I first started it was 25 young people we now take up to 50 a day. Here's to many more years of Playscheme .

**Michelle Morgan**



**Jacqui Munro**



My daughter Hollie was one of the original service users 24 years ago. Many parents such as myself received no respite care outside of school hours. The Playscheme ensured I could give much needed time to my other children and for Hollie to socialise with friends from school. It was a literal life saver!

I was always very interested in the role and 11 years ago I became a Playworker /driver. The role was and still is very satisfying because you know you are providing an excellent service to families. Following on I then applied to Mary Rose Academy to take on the role of teaching assistant 10 years ago and my time is now divided between the school and Enable Ability. Both roles complement each other and I enjoy passing on the skills I have learnt to new workers .



## Natalie Richardson

I started as a play worker at the Clifffdale site which was home to the younger age range of children who attended Playscheme and ultimately became a senior in the team. I have learnt so much through working with Enable Ability like how to deal with hard times and tricky situations. It has definitely been an eye opener to how I live my life and made me appreciate what I have and not worry about what I don't. The children are an absolute joy to work with and they bring so much energy and love to a job that can be hard but very rewarding. They teach you that life isn't always happy and easy but you have to keep going and enjoy it whatever it throws at you. They are true inspiration to me and for that I'm forever grateful. I look forward to more Playschemes and fun times over the coming years.



## Sebastian Olway

It all started back in 2010 when, my friend Sam told me on my birthday, that we would be working with the younger children at Clifffdale which was led by Zoe Plowman. It was an amazing experience and my first flavour of what Playscheme was. After many years and many different playschemes, I eventually progressed to become a senior playworker which meant working with an incredibly dedicated team of people. The opportunities which Enable Ability gave me enabled me to work towards a career in school leadership. I am about to begin my third year as Deputy Headteacher of a Primary School in Hampshire whilst also taking on the role of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo). I draw upon experiences, opportunities, skills and knowledge which I gained when working at Enable Ability on a daily basis in the role I have. Most importantly, I learnt to stay calm and know that there is always a way to overcome challenges.

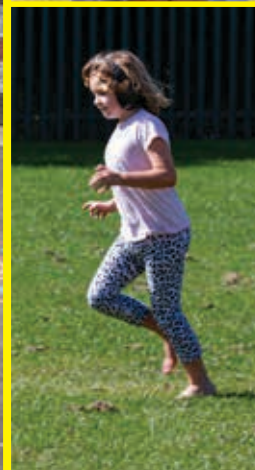
I'd like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has supported me directly and indirectly at Enable Ability and congratulate the charity on a successful 25 years of Playschemes.



A Fantastic  
25th Party Day









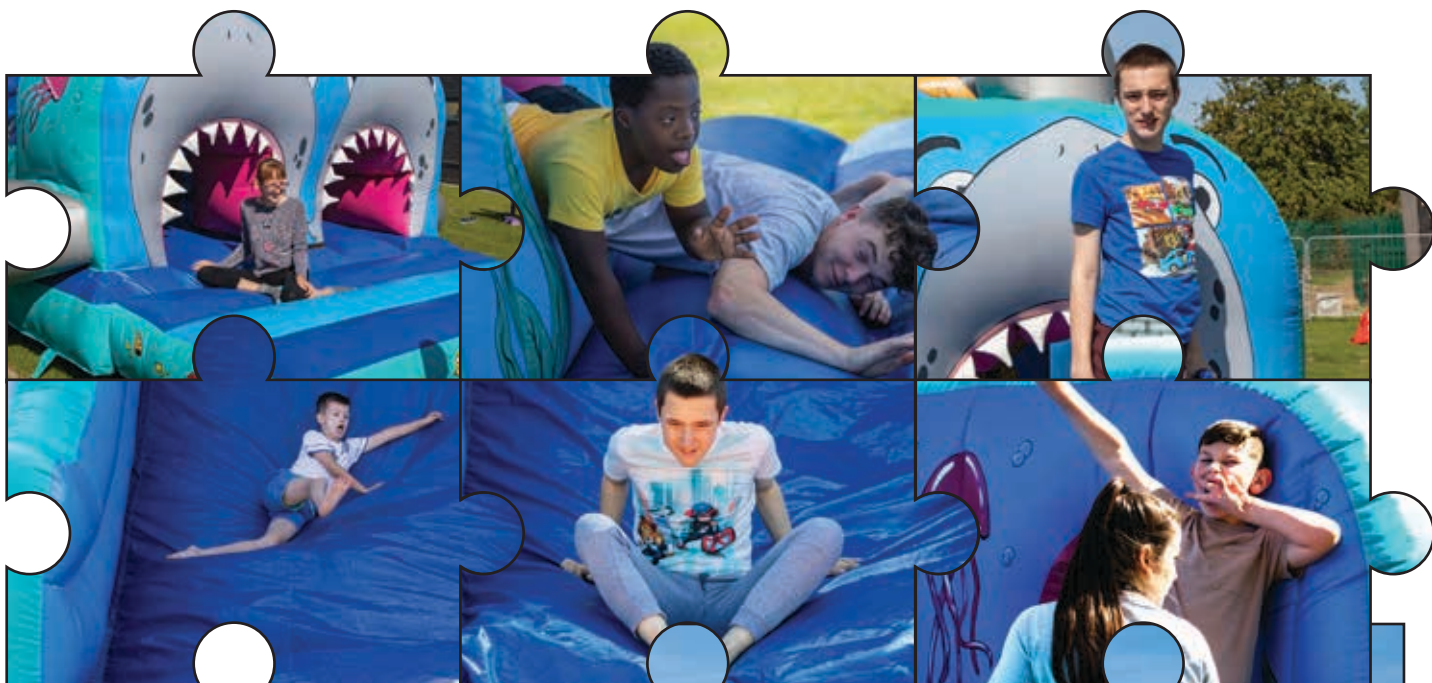
My bestie & me



# Bouncy Fun







# Inflatable Day



# Puzzle Time

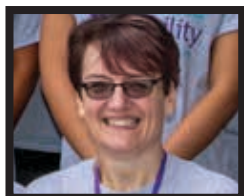




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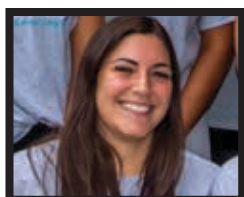
## Meet the team:



**Michelle Morgan**



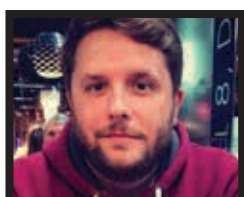
**Jacqui Munro**



**Danni Dean**



**Charlotte Bleach**



**Paul Watts**



**Julie Nethercote**



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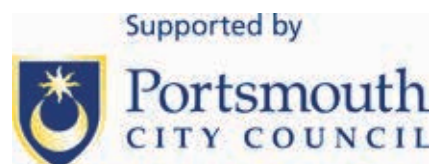
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