



Supporting your child

At Cheetham CE Community Academy is committed to the positive mental health and well-being of all of our pupils. Research tells us that a child's mental health can affect every aspect of their functioning, growth and development and can seriously impede their potential educational outcomes in the short and long term.

We recognise that every child is unique and develops at their own pace and has the right to an educational environment which is inclusive and sensitive to changing family needs. At Cheetham we provide a supportive approach for the promotion of pupils' mental health and well-being through providing accessible support and interventions through lots of different ways.

Meet our amazing Pastoral team

Mrs Zaman—SENCo (Special Needs Coordinator)

Mrs Gallagher—Family Liaison Officer

Ms Borso—Therapeutic Play Practitioner

Mr McKernan—Pastoral Support Worker

Mrs Zaman—SENCo— Special Educational Needs Coordinator



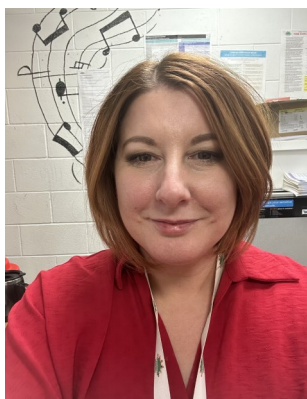
My name is Sajida Zaman and I am one of the Assistant Heads, SENCO and Behaviour lead at school. I have been at Cheetham for a number of years and have been a SENCo for over 15 years.

I feel this experience has allowed me to gain lots of experience and knowledge of various needs. I am able to meet with parents and give advice on strategies they can use to support their child's learning needs as well as SEMH and wellbeing needs.

I have attended various training such as CAMHS training sessions, this has allowed me to make referrals to CAMHS on the school and parents behalf. I have also been trained as a Youth Mental Health First Aider, which has given me a huge insight in how I can support parents and children in my school. I work alongside external agencies to support children's social, emotional, mental and health needs and behaviour needs in school. I always collaborate with parents as teamwork and having open communication is very important to me.

Parents can contact me by emailing me directly on s.zaman@cheetham.manchester.sch.uk

Mrs Zoe Gallagher—Family Liaison Officer



My name is Zoe Gallagher and I am the schools Family liaison Officer. I have worked in the school for over 10 years and have met so many wonderful families in Cheetham. The biggest part of my job is working in partnership with families, parents, carers and pupils in school, to enable pupils, to have full access to educational opportunities.

Parents who are worried and feel they may need support, whatever the reasons can come and have a chat with me. Together we look at what's working well and what could be better. I always start with what's working well as sometimes when we are worried, we often forget the good things that are going on in our families and home life. The things that are not working so well, then we look into specialist agencies who will be able to help make changes for the better. I also think it's important that children have a voice where support is in place for families, as they may too have worries and concerns.

I have many links to a range of support services such as Early Help, Health Visitors, the school nurse, cost of living support, support groups for children and parents of SEND, mental health support services (for adults and children), young carers, parenting courses, youth clubs, adult education and much more. I will always go out my way to find the right service to help our families in school.

I believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise their educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident, and competent adults who can realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

I also facilitate the school's community room with community courses and events. This opens many opportunities for parents to access employability, English and wellbeing courses.

My door is always open to anyone who wants to speak to me, just ask for Zoe Gallagher at the main office. Alternatively, to make an appointment to see me then call the school number on 0161 740 5996 or email z.gallagher@cheetham.manchester.sch.uk

Ms Borso—Therapeutic Play Practitioner



My name is Ms Borso and I am a qualified Therapeutic Play Practitioner. I deliver play therapy sessions to children who may need some additional emotional support. I work with children individually or in a small group in a safe space called the Sunshine room. I also work very closely with other members of the Pastoral team and I have regular Supervision from a certified supervisor. If you have concerns about your child's social and emotional wellbeing please speak to the office staff and they can arrange an appointment for you to speak to me.

Completing an SDQ

An initial part of my work involves completing a Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to help me understand how I can best support your child. It is CAMHS and Ofsted recognised.

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) explained:

The SDQ is a brief assessment tool for measuring a child's strengths and difficulties in four specific areas of development; emotions, peer interactions, hyperactivity and conduct. It provides a Total Difficulties Score out of 40 which decreases if it improves. There is also a Pro Social score out of 10 which measures the ability for positive social behaviour and empathy which increases if it improves. Scores are taken pre and post therapy to help assess any change made.

The Sunshine Room

The Sunshine room provides a confidential play space where children can explore their thoughts and feelings in a safe environment with few limitations and without judgment. The room is play based, child friendly, and looks like this.



The Sunshine Room combines therapeutic, nurturing and educational approaches. Pupils access the time-tabled interventions in small groups, pairs or as individuals. Sessions are held at the same time on the same day each week. This offers consistency which is important for a child to feel safe and to build a trusting therapeutic relationship.

Common reasons for referrals

Bereavement (siblings, parents, grandparents etc..)

Illness (child, siblings, parents etc...)

Family separations

Homelessness

Support for looked after children

Transition to high school

New arrivals / friendship, confidence building and self esteem support

Attachment issues (parent/ child support)

Support for children with ASD/ ADHD and other SEN needs

SEN sibling support

The latest neuroscience research shows that the emotional brain develops in response to the nurturing a child receives. Absence of nurturing (either **real**, **circumstantial** or **perceived**) can affect brain development which can result in social and emotional difficulties. Research also shows that the brain remains 'plastic' for longer offering the opportunity to redress missed opportunities. Providing a nurturing environment, a therapeutic relationship and specific activities provides a second opportunity to develop the emotional brain.

The Sunshine room interventions/sessions are a relaxed and structured approach to help children in a range of ways:

- It provides a safe space for emotional expression
- Children are supported to express their thoughts and feelings in constructive ways
- It fosters decision-making and acceptance of responsibility
- It facilitates the development of problem-solving, coping skills and resilience
- It helps children to explore and practise social skills
- It helps children to make friends and learn about their ever expanding world
- It allows children to learn from mistakes safely
- It encourages confidence and concentration
- It fosters imagination and creativity
- It supports emotional healing and growth

Within the school setting access to interventions/sessions in the Sunshine room can have benefits for both the child and teaching staff by facilitating improvements in:

- Participation in group work
- Communication with others
- Listening
- Concentration on work
- Reduced exclusions
- Improvement in attendance rates



What kind of activities might a child access in the Sunshine room?



Role play offers an opportunity to reenact traumatic experiences in a safe place with support. This often empowers the child as they are the ones in control which helps with the process.



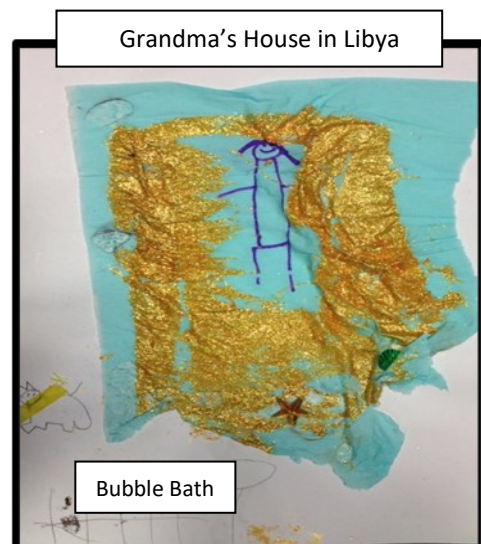
Some children use creative materials to help them explore their inner most feelings. A mask could be many things but what might look quite scary could be something made to hide behind.



Therapeutic story telling has been a very powerful activity. Acting out children's thoughts, feelings and events in the safe familiar context of play.

Examples of children's creative work within a Sunshine room session

A child's picture of what they remembered after listening to a calming visualisation. Also a child's own happy memory which they may use in times of felt stress/anxiety in order to regulate their emotions. These are often put on bedroom walls or have been taken into hospital by children.



What people say about the sessions?

My daughter has benefited by spending time in the Sunshine Room with Ms Borso, She has become more calm and helped her open up to speak' .

Parent

'My son is now happy and likes coming to school. He is able to open up to somebody in school about how he feels. I think that this is helping him in himself and in with his behaviour'

Parent

'You helped me through so much! I will be sure to never forget you ...ever!

Yr 6 child

'I really, really want to say thank you. Thank you for supporting me in my darkest moment. You have been one of the most supporting teachers in this school and I will miss you in year 7 . I hope you will remember to shine when others need you' .

Yr 6 child

'I am social worker for a young person who attended Cheetham CE Community Academy . The school offered valuable support to this child during difficult times in his life. He experienced a move from family and a foster placement breakdown. He refused to talk to anybody about how he was feeling. The work he did with Ms Borso was invaluable. He did open up to her and told her how he felt. She helped us to move forward to support him. She helped prevent him from permanent exclusion Thank you for being their for this child. I know he will miss you when in high school and so will I'

Social worker

'I have worked with a child with a visual impairment at Cheetham for the last 18 months. The child has struggled with his medical diagnosis and needed somebody to talk to about his condition and the impact it was having on his emotions. Ms Borso contacted me and we spent some time discussing his condition, how it impacted on his learning and his struggle in coming to terms with the permanent nature of his visual impairment.

Ms Borso has spent time with the child on a 1:1 basis in giving him the space to discuss his feelings, hopes and fears, around his visual impairment. She also signposted the pupil to a child friendly book explaining his condition. I appreciate the time and effort Ms Borso has spent in supporting the child. As I am a visiting Teacher of the Visually Impaired, I have a limited time allocation to work with the child and appreciate her support'.

Visually Impaired teacher

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Mr McKernan



My name is Mr McKernan and I am part of the Pastoral team at Cheetham. The wellbeing of pupils is very important. I want children to be happy to come to school and enjoy being in class, make friendships and think of school as a happy and safe place to learn every day. My main role is supporting children in and out of class. I help children in different ways, it might be with their social skills, understanding and managing emotions or thinking about themselves and others. If ever you would like to meet with me to discuss your child or just a friendly chat for some advice, just let the office team know and I would be happy to arrange a time.

Here are some websites that you may find useful to support your child.

Find answers to parenting questions in our advice articles. Or talk to a parenting coach about anything that's worrying you. It's all free, and no topic is too big or small.

<https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/>

This is a service run by the NHS to support children with their emotional wellbeing

<https://m-thrive.org/m-thrive-for-professionals/m-thrive-offer-professional-services>

Wellbeing resources for families:

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/our-services/parents-and-carers/wellbeing-resources-for-families/>

A good one around basics for getting moving and eating healthily. Specially designed for families:

<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/>

A popular Youtube channel born out of yoga and wellbeing. There is a section dedicated to mindfulness. It's well done and very visual:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8snGkhBF7ngDp1oJtx5VcjwatxZn8xLK>

Maybe worth mentioning the videos I made for Lockdown. Lots of activities you can do around the home without any specific materials and low cost. It's our Cheetham Challenger Youtube channel. (I made 74 so there's plenty to go at):

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLGL7hCMrmCmR4DDFiNwLZQ/videos>