



**THE OAKLEA TRUST**  
*Towards independence...*

**Helen Sharples**

I retired reluctantly from working in Education in August 2006 after 42 years. I was still enjoying what I did when I retired. I have taught students from the age of 2 up to 60+. I held management posts in education for the over 20 years, mainly connected with pastoral work and special educational needs. My main interest has been in special educational needs within the main stream setting and I gained post graduate qualifications in special needs. I have been involved in the training of teachers in Cumbria and Lancashire to enable them to understand the needs of students with both physical and learning disabilities.

Most of my recent work has involved working closely with students and their parents to enable the students to achieve both educationally and socially. This involved working with outside agencies, liaising with teaching assistants, chairing meetings, writing profiles of individual students to help other staff understand their needs, preparing risk assessments and care plans with help from outside agencies and looking at the long term and short term needs of the students.

I have only been on the board of The Oaklea Trust since July 2007. I joined the board because I felt the Trust provided a good service to the community.