

# A RESOURCE FILE

for schools to support children  
with Special Educational Needs



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# Introduction



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## **INTRODUCTION**

The number of children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) identified by schools has risen significantly in recent years and is now almost 65,000 or 19.7% of the school population; of these some 13,900 (4.2% of the overall school enrolment) have statements of special educational needs with most being educated in mainstream schools.

It is estimated that some 25% of children and young people experience a barrier to learning at some time in their school career; consequently a mainstream teacher may have a variety of learning needs to address within class. Often these needs are complex as a result of the interaction between social, emotional, psychological and biological factors and they present a challenge to the teacher to find an approach which motivates and engages the child or young person to access the curriculum, learn and make progress.

Many schools have developed very good and outstanding provision for children with SEN. A resource file has been compiled which seeks to disseminate this effective practice and help to enable all schools to meet effectively the needs of children and young people with SEN within the existing requirements and responsibilities placed on schools by the current legislative framework, mainly the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986, the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005, the Code of Practice (DE 1998) and the Supplement to the Code of Practice (DE 2005). In addition, the resources will help the workforce to adapt to, and implement better, any future policy changes that may be brought about by the review of special educational needs and inclusion. The overarching aim is to build the schools' capacity to develop appropriate and effective interventions to meet identified needs as early as possible. Inclusion requires members of the school workforce to recognise that they have the skills, or the potential to enhance their skills, to improve the educational outcomes of all children.

Every School a Good School: A Policy for School Improvement (DE 2009) states that schools and teachers are expected to identify their own training and support needs through self-evaluation and self-assessment. It is envisaged that

teachers will increasingly take ownership of their professional development; they will require information and resources to do this.

Many useful sets of guidelines and advice for teachers of children and young people with SEN have been produced over the past decade by the Department of Education (DE), the Education and Library Boards (ELBs), the Teacher Training Institutions, cross-border working groups and others. Also the General Teaching Council of Northern Ireland has published the professional competences for teachers - Teaching: the Reflective Profession where the 27 teacher competences have been organised into three broad areas within the document including 'Professional Values and Practice' and 'Professional Knowledge and Understanding'; special educational needs are an integral part of the competencies. This resource file endeavours to enhance these resources with practical and effective classroom strategies and to present them in one compendium for ease of access by teachers and support staff.

The resources file was produced by working parties of principals, teachers, lecturers and other educationalists who shared their considerable skills and experience and identified useful and effective strategies, shaping these into a common framework for use by all teachers and support staff. It is hoped that the resources and skill set to which these resources contribute can be deployed to support children not only with SEN but with a range of barriers to learning.

Some element of self-evaluation needs to be present in every school because self-evaluation is the main basis on which effective provision can be ensured. The resource file contains a set of SEN indicators to guide classroom and school planning and to provide a standard against which effective provision can be self assessed. The indicators are based on the Together Towards Improvement (TTI) documents and can be used to supplement whole school SEN planning. The sector specific TTI documents can be accessed at <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement.htm> and can be tailored to the precise needs of each school through the word document format. The SEN indicators can be used in conjunction with other self-assessment tools, on their own for selected parts of practice for SEN, or for a whole school audit of practice for SEN, leading to an action plan for improvement.



The resource file provides information and links to a range of professional development opportunities where teachers can extend further their skills by:

- using those sections of the resource file which are useful to them;
- using the resource file for professional development of groups of staff, at whole school or cluster meeting levels;
- identifying on-line learning from a wide range of sources covering all aspects of SEN provision; and
- sourcing additional reading and DVD materials.

The resource file is a work in progress; the knowledge and expertise in teaching children with SEN is evolving continually and it is planned to add to the file by publishing further sections through LearningNI; schools will be alerted to new materials and will be able to download these and add them to the file.

The Department of Education wishes to acknowledge the work of the capacity building writing teams, drawn from a cross section of schools, Teacher Training Institutions and ELBs, who have given their time and expertise most generously to produce this resource. The Department is grateful to the National Strategy team in the Department for Education (formerly DCSF) for its advice and permission to include information on their professional development materials, and to the Department of Education and Skills for permission to use materials from 'Signposts' and to ETI for contributing to the material. The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland has provided welcome advice and support for the training modules produced. Special thanks must be given to colleagues at C2k for their expertise and vision on the electronic aspects of the project that have become intrinsic to the planning and process of the capacity building materials for principals, teachers and school staff.

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## Leadership & Management



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## Introduction

Schools demonstrate commitment to identifying and removing barriers to learning and achievement on a daily basis. The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 placed duties on the Boards of Governors of mainstream schools in relation to provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). The Special Education and Disability (NI) Order 2005 strengthened the rights of children with a statement of Special Educational Needs to mainstream education and introduced, for the first time, disability discrimination laws for the whole education system.

The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (1998 DE) and the Supplement to the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (2005 DE) established the way that special education is managed in schools. The Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order (2005) is another catalyst to develop inclusion. Opportunities for greater collaboration have also come on stream, for example, through Area Learning Communities (ALC) and many schools have committed to developing inclusive communities.

This section provides suggestions for Governors, principals, and other school leaders from the writing group of principals and Education and Library Board (ELB) officers on how to lead and manage effectively provision for children with SEN. Specific advice is provided for nursery, primary and post-primary schools, along with suggestions for the effective management of resources, including human resources such as teachers and classroom assistants. The strategies and suggestions are not intended to be comprehensive checklists; however those suggested here have been useful and effective for the members of the writing group.

### **Characteristics of Effective Schools for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion**

Inclusion is a process by which schools, ELBs and others develop their cultures, policies and practices to include pupils. The Supplement to the Code of Practice

on the Identification and Assessment of Children with Special Educational Needs operative from September 2005 sets out practical guidance (in Section 5) aimed at promoting improvement in inclusive practices, assists schools and Boards make effective decisions and encourages schools to develop whole school acceptance of children with SEN in the work and the life of the school.

Boards of Governors and school leaders should ensure they are fully acquainted with that Guidance.

### Culture and Ethos

- The school is committed to a school improvement agenda.
- The school is child centred in terms of ethos and culture.
- Social deprivation or other barriers to learning are not seen as an excuse for further educational failure.
- High expectations are maintained for all children.
- The voice of the child is given high importance in terms of planning to meet needs, including establishing and reviewing Education Plans.
- The school is actively engaged in community development and supporting community learning needs.
- Parents are welcomed as partners in the planning and delivery of learning.
- The needs of the whole child are addressed rather than focusing only on measurable outcomes.
- Meaningful links are maintained with the local special school; this may include sharing of staff expertise and opportunities taken for joint training.

### **Governors**

- The Board of Governors may have a committee from their Governors, or a Governor, with responsibility for special educational needs and inclusion.
- Barriers to achievement are identified and meaningful steps are taken to remove the barriers.

### **Planning**

- The school development plan consistently identifies areas for improvement in special educational needs (SEN) and inclusion.
- School resources, including budget, are regularly targeted at special educational needs and inclusion.
- Good practice in SEN and inclusion is identified and disseminated in school and between schools.

### **Senior Leadership**

- The principal is passionate about ensuring all children and young people have their needs identified and met.
- The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) may be a member of the school's Senior Management Team / Senior Leadership Team and make regular contributions on the special educational needs and inclusion agenda.
- The whole staff takes responsibility for meeting the needs of all pupils in the school, regardless of the child's ability, SEN, disability, social background or home language.
- Continuing Professional Development is given a high priority for all staff in the school.

- The support staff is seen as an important part of the inclusion team and are included in the planning process, monitoring and evaluation.
- Data is used effectively to identify pupils in need of support and monitor their progress during intervention.
- Pupil needs are supported on the basis of individualised planning, and support offered accordingly.
- A balance is maintained between supporting pupils through withdrawal and in-class support.
- Time is taken for consultation with support services to ensure a unified approach is in place to meet individual pupil needs.

This is not an exhaustive list and educational policy changes may impact on this list in the future.

### **Governor Guidance for Leading and Managing Provision for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion**

It is acknowledged that many Governors of schools have a wealth of experience and expertise to inform the provision for SEN and inclusion. The governing body also includes parents, and schools can benefit from the valuable insights they can bring to enhance the school improvement agenda.

The Department of Education published a document – 'Every School a Good School' – The Governor Role' in 2010 (DE, 2010b). Chapter 12 of the document relates specifically to the Governor role for pupils with special educational needs. The chapter can be accessed from the link at the end of the chapter.

The following section provides an overview of Governor's responsibilities from the handbook:



The role of the Board of Governors of a mainstream school is to exercise its functions in relation to the school with a view to ensuring that provision is made for registered pupils with special educational needs. The Board of Governors has a **statutory** duty to:

- take account of the provisions in the DE Code of Practice on identifying and assessing special educational needs;
- use their best endeavours to provide for pupils identified with SEN and that parents are notified of their child's special needs;
- maintain and operate a policy on SEN;
- ensure that where a registered pupil has special educational needs, those needs are made known to all who are likely to teach them;
- ensure that the teachers in the school know the importance of identifying those registered pupils with SEN and of providing appropriate teaching;
- allocate funding for special educational needs and disability; and
- prepare and take forward a written accessibility plan.

It is recommended that the Governors take account of the specific guidance from Chapter 12 of the Handbook. The Board of Governors may establish a committee of its members to monitor the school's work for children with special educational needs.

## Guidance for Principals Leading and Managing Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

In all schools there is a requirement that schools follow the relevant SEN and disability legislation including the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996, the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and Codes of Practice (DE 1998, DE 2005 and Equality Commission 2005). Links to the legislation and codes are provided at the end of this section. Governors and principals should ensure that they are familiar with the relevant documentation.

### The School Development Planning Process, Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

- Emphasis has been given over recent years to the school development planning process and for the need for schools to be self-evaluative, as evidenced through the introduction of the School Development Planning Regulations (2005) and School Development Planning Regulations (2010) along with specific guidance from the Department of Education (DE) in 2011.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2010/395/contents/made>

- The starting point for schools developing their provision for children with a SEN and inclusion is to conduct an audit of the strengths and areas for development. A wide range of audit tools are available. The Quality Indicators for the Work of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators have been developed by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) as an audit tool as part of Together Towards Improvement (TTI) (ETI, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d). The areas for improvement should be identified through an audit process and action plans established as part of the school development plan.
- One of the characteristics of an inclusive school is where special educational needs and inclusion regularly feature as areas for improvement on the school development plan with a summary and evaluation of the school strategies for providing for the special, additional or other individual needs of pupils.

## **Leadership and Management of Special Education Needs and Inclusion in Nursery Schools and Units**

One of the principles of good practice in special educational needs and inclusion is that children should have their needs identified early. Often it will be in the pre-school sector where a child's needs are first identified. Nursery schools and classes are expected to follow broadly the same procedures for identifying and meeting young children's special educational needs as are recommended for children of compulsory school age.

Some nursery schools and units have outstanding practice for SEN, however, the sector also face a range of leadership and management challenges in seeking to do their best for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Time pressures need to be addressed, especially for a teaching principal or teacher who has lots of different roles and other duties. Time will be needed for paper work, to meet with other professionals, agencies and parents.

Parents of young children may find it difficult to acknowledge their child has difficulties and pre-school staff may have to provide a lot of support for parents to help them come to terms with the child's needs.

The following points of good practice are suggested.

- The ethos of the school or unit reflects an inclusive child centred approach.
- The staff's expectations of the children are realistically high and based on a recognition of their strengths, as well as their needs.
- The school or unit identifies, with support where necessary, the additional educational needs of individual children and include parents and in this process.
- The children show enjoyment in their learning and achievements.

- The principal and teachers develop regular contact and establish good relationships with parents.
- The roles and responsibilities for classroom assistants are clearly defined and agreed by teaching and non-teaching staff.
- The staff in the school or unit work closely with professionals of other agencies.
- There are regular reviews to ensure the children are benefiting from the programme of support.
- The school or unit records demonstrate that the children are making good progress in line with their ability and stage of development.

### **Pre-School Settings and the Code of Practice**

It is considered good practice that all pre-school settings should bear in mind the importance of early identification and provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Therefore, those pre-school settings, not already covered by the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs 1998 and the Supplement (2005) to it may wish to voluntarily take on board the guidance.

### **Leadership and Management of Special Education Needs and Inclusion in the Primary School**

The following points of good practice are suggested.

- The ethos of the school reflects an inclusive child centred approach.
- The principal and staff have wholehearted commitment to inclusion and being pupil focussed.

- A school Governor takes responsibility for SEN and attends Governor training as available.
- There are effective lines of communication to ensure that all members of the teaching staff and non-teaching staff are aware of the school's vision for the children who require additional support.
- A model of delegated leadership within the primary school contributes to the ethos of the teacher as leader and manager for special needs within each classroom setting.
- In the small school setting, the senior management team may include all members of the teaching staff who may carry a range of responsibilities. Within such teams, however small, one member of the teaching staff assumes responsibility for the co-ordination of special educational needs.
- The principal ensures that the SENCO is provided with adequate time, outside of normal classroom duties where possible, to ensure that s/he can fulfil their SENCO duties.
- The principal ensures that timetables are flexible to allow learning support teachers to support pupils in class, or through withdrawal, on an individual or group basis as required.
- Data are used effectively to identify underachievement and ensure intervention is appropriately targeted.
- The development of SEN provision within the SDP is inclusive and linked across the curriculum rather than a separate bolt-on issue; regular, robust self-evaluation procedures are in place.
- Teachers and classroom assistants work together to plan, deliver and evaluate provision including the child's individualised Education Plan (IEP).

- The provision of continuing professional development for special educational needs for the SENCO and the teachers is linked to the SDP and may contribute to Performance Review Staff Development (PRSD).
- The professional development for SEN available for the wider school workforce.
- The voice of the child is valued.
- The parent's role is valued and parents are seen as partners.
- The roles and responsibilities for classroom assistants are clearly defined and agreed by teaching and non-teaching staff.
- The school establishes links with its local schools, including special schools, and seeks to extend its expertise for SEN through collaboration.
- Effective management is in place for pupils transitioning from primary to post primary school.
- Accurate information and pupil level data is forwarded to the post primary school to ensure continuity for pupils.

### **Leadership and Management of Special Educational Needs and Inclusion in the Post-Primary School**

The following points of good practice are suggested.

- The ethos of the school is one that continues to focus on developing inclusion.
- The principal has wholehearted commitment to inclusion and being pupil focussed.

- An accessibility plan is in place.
- A regular, consistent approach to communication is in place.
- On the Board of Governors, a committee, or a Governor, has been identified to take responsibility for SEN and inclusion.
- Members of staff are committed to inclusion and to removing barriers to learning, and are developing the capacity for this.
- The school is committed to school improvement and to capacity building to ensure that all teaching staff take responsibility for meeting the needs of all pupils.
- The school development plan has a focus on inclusion and links into the overall school improvement programme.
- The SENCO is a member of the Senior Leadership or Senior Management Team where appropriate.
- The principal ensures that the SENCO is provided with adequate time, outside of normal classroom duties, to ensure that s/he can fulfil their SENCO duties.
- Quality assurance is in place for SEN and inclusion through regular, robust self-evaluation.
- Continuous professional development for SEN includes all staff.
- Curriculum provision, assessment and accreditation are appropriate to the needs of the pupils.
- Data are used effectively to identify underachievement and ensure intervention is appropriately targeted.

- Teacher planning takes account of pupils with SEN and disability, including a consideration of the objectives in the Educational Psychology Report or Statement.
- IEPs are written by class teachers in collaboration with the SENCO and classroom assistants.
- The voice of the child is valued and taken on board.
- Social deprivation or other barriers to learning are not used as an excuse for future educational underachievement.
- Appropriate use of added value takes place to contextualise school performance.
- Assessment for Learning and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities approaches are embedded in the curriculum.
- The school has a school's council that is empowered to make decisions where appropriate.
- Links have been established with the local special school and good practice is shared.
- Effective management is in place for pupils transitioning from primary to post primary school and for leaving school.
- Collaborative practice is in place with voluntary agencies.
- The parent's role is valued and the school works with them to better understand the barriers that may be present.
- The school has positive links with the local community and may proactively take steps to enhance learning in the community.



## **More Inclusive and Creative use of Resources**

Schools have a level of financial and other resources to address special educational needs. They should consider, along with ELBs as appropriate, how to make the most effective and creative use of the resources to address the needs of the children and young people in keeping with the resources to address the needs of the children and young people in keeping with the provision in the statement of special educational needs where one is in place. These considerations might include the appropriate balance between extra teaching and classroom assistance.

The Extended Schools Initiative and the Full Service Schools agenda have also provided the opportunity for schools to employ a wider body of professionals to support pupil needs. Schools may also wish to link with voluntary agencies and providers for training for staff in specific areas of SEN.

A further area which schools may wish to consider is sharing resources. In the future there may be more scope for the exchange of staff for mentoring and shadowing and learning from each other.

## **Good Practice in the Classroom for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion; the role of teachers**

Many schools have mission statements and a wide range of policies. One of the tests of the quality of a school is whether or not the mission and policies can be evidenced in the ethos and everyday practice. Ideally, the vision for the school should be articulated by the principal and be agreed by all stakeholders. This should contribute towards a unified approach.

The success of the inclusion agenda can best be delivered through the teachers on a daily basis. Clearly, the SENCO and learning support team cannot be expected to work alone. The following examples illustrate the characteristics of inclusion for teachers:

- Teacher planning takes account of the individual pupil strengths and areas for development.
- Consideration is given to a personalised learning agenda for pupils.
- Where a pupil has a statement of special educational needs or an educational psychology report, the objectives are taken into account to inform teacher planning.
- The teacher collaborates with the SENCO and classroom assistant to ensure that they have sufficient professional knowledge to meet the needs of pupils in his/her class.
- The teacher accepts equal responsibility for their professional development in SEN. Where training is required advice can be sought from the SENCO; a range of ELB courses are available, see the ELB website; and on-line courses are available for professional development through Learning NI, C2K at no cost.
- The teacher collaborates effectively with the SENCO in establishing, monitoring and reviewing the EP.
- The EP contains SMART targets that provide sufficient challenge appropriate to the ability of the child.
- Learning and teaching is carefully differentiated to ensure that the curriculum is appropriate for individual pupil needs.
- The teacher uses data to monitor and inform future planning for pupils.
- The teacher and classroom assistant work in partnership with a clear understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities.

- Each department in a post primary school has a link teacher for SEN to liaise with the senior management or senior leadership team or learning support team and advise colleagues in terms of meeting the needs of pupils.
- The teacher has detailed records and knowledge of the pupil for meaningful parent-teacher consultation.

### **School Management of Classroom Assistants**

Schools will find it helpful to engage with parents on the best deployment of support within the classroom to progress the learning outcomes for the individual pupil. That consideration should include a strategy to foster the development of independence. Care also needs to be taken that there is not a disproportionate number of adults in the room.

School leaders and managers should ensure that teachers are trained in the management of the classroom assistant in the classroom. At all times classroom assistants are to 'work under the direction of and in partnership with the teacher' The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) Competences (GTCNI, 2007, p32) places a responsibility on the teacher to 'deploy, organise and guide the work of other adults to support pupils' learning, when appropriate' (Competence 16).

The school should have a clear policy in place to determine the parameters by which the classroom assistant should work. This may avoid situations where the assistant may inadvertently operate outside their remit.

### **Guidance for the Effective use of Classroom Assistants**

Classroom assistants are commonplace in a significant number of mainstream schools across Northern Ireland. Where assistants are used effectively, they can make a meaningful difference to the inclusion and progress of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Ideally, the assistant should be included in any professional development that is being provided to the teaching staff in the area of SEN and inclusion. It is recognised that on occasions this may not always be possible where the assistant is funded by an external agency such as the ELB or by DE in the case of Grant Maintained Integrated and Voluntary Grammar Schools.

The assistant should be seen as part of the SEN and inclusion team in a school, and be involved in the planning for the pupils. This should include establishing specific targets for the child / young person in terms of what is being addressed on the Education Plan.

### **Good Practice Guidelines for the Use of Classroom Assistants**

The classroom assistant will:

- assist the teacher to develop the independence of the child;
- be included as part of whole school professional development activities;
- develop specialised expertise to meet the individual needs of the children with whom they work;
- contribute to a clear understanding of their own role amongst other staff;
- be actively involved in the appraisal of their work and agreement of targets set with them in consultation with school management;
- establish a clear role within promotion of the child's development moving the child towards independence and adult life;

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- contribute to the promotion of the inclusive ethos of the school;
- promote the self-esteem and emotional well-being of the child;
- understand the significance of their role and contributing to the overall social, emotional, learning and pastoral development of the children within the school;
- contribute to the planning, preparation and, where appropriate, facilitation of learning;
- contribute, in partnership with school staff, to the planning, monitoring and evaluation of progress of the children within their care;
- contribute to the on-going review processes of the child including working alongside others in the school with outside agencies; and
- work as part of the school team to promote effective relationships with parents.

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## **A History of the Models of Special Educational Needs**

Models of SEN and disability have been subject to discussion and debate for some time, as their proponents have suggested frameworks for understanding the way in which people experience special educational needs and disability (Low, 2006; Mitra, 2006). They also provide a reference point for society in relation to how laws, regulations and structures are developed and how they impact on the lives of disabled people (Cole 2008, Mitz, 2007). There are three main models which will be considered, the medical model, the social model. (See Ainscow and Tweddle, 1979, Booth and Ainscow , 2002) and the School Improvement Model.

### **The Medical Model**

This model sees pupils with SEN as being the problem and the expectation is that they need to change and adapt to circumstances that are presented to them with no acknowledgement that society needs to change. The implications of following this model can create situations where:-

- The Board of Governors are not involved in leading and managing SEN.
- The Board of Governors may not have appointed a SENCO).
- The responsibility of managing Special Educational Needs is perceived by the management and staff to be solely the responsibility of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO).
- The SENCO is not a member of the school's Senior Management Team.

- Special Educational Needs is not included in the School Development Plan and staff and parents are not consulted about this aspect of school improvement.
- Teachers are not accepting of the need to continually professionally develop.
- Schools are dependent on the provision of classroom assistant hours to help manage special educational needs provision.
- The classroom assistants are not effectively used.
- The school continually seeks additional resources in order to meet the needs of pupils with SEN.
- The school is reactive rather than proactive in terms of meeting the needs of new pupils with special or additional educational needs.
- The school does not engage with relevant partners, agencies and stakeholders.

### **The Social Model**

This was developed by people with disability and acknowledges how society discriminates against people with impairments and excludes them from involvement and participation and argues that the greatest limiting factor is not individual disabilities but rather the limitations and barriers presented by society. In the social model, it is necessary for schools to identify the barriers to achievement and seek to address these along with developing the whole child.

Meeting the diverse needs of children with SEN is a fundamental goal for teachers in ensuring they develop an inclusive curriculum in which all pupils gain full access and entitlement to education (Lloyd, 2000; Norwich 2002). In addressing the full continuum of children's needs the social model requires

teachers to work flexibly and creatively to adapt learning environments that are conducive to learning for all. In other words children who potentially may be marginalised and/or experience barriers to learning have the same rights to challenge and progress in education.

### **The School Improvement Model**

This is a more recent model (Skidmore, 2004). The essential thinking behind this is that where a child with SEN and or disability fails to thrive, that the focus should be on the environment and not the individual child. This model is the one that schools currently focus on, and fits well with the 'Every School a Good School' agenda.

To bring about improvement it will therefore be necessary to improve the environment and create a match with the needs of the child. In the school context, this means making reasonable adjustments to the curriculum and premises as well as focussing on building the capacity of all staff to meet the needs of pupils through continuing professional development. Important in this approach is that schools should see the issues from the perspective of the pupils, and look beyond the SEN and disability. The concept of the 'environment' extends to the community the school serves; to quote Anna Hassan, Headteacher from Millfields Community School in Hackney (See Ryan, 2007) ***'There can be no school development without community development and no community development without school development.'***





## The Role of the SENCO



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## **Introduction**

This chapter examines the origin and the changing role of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The content focuses on relevant legislation, the supporting Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Children with SEN (DENI, 1998) in Northern Ireland and the perspectives of what research has shown in relation to the changing role of the SENCO. It sets out the role of the SENCO and makes suggestions as to how SENCOs can effectively ensure inclusive cultures, policies and practice within schools. The chapter concludes by considering some other key issues in relation to the role of the SENCO as well as looking ahead to possible further changes.

## **Background – Legislation**

Throughout the history of SEN, there have been significant changes in educational values and practices, which have influenced the legislative process and the implementation of numerous policies. This has led to on-going change from segregation to inclusion for SEN provision in England and Wales and subsequently in Northern Ireland.

One of the most significant changes which influenced policy and practice in SEN was the Warnock Report (DES, 1978). legislated by the Education Act (1981) and subsequently the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. This 1986 Order provided the initial impetus for the inclusion of children with SEN. It introduced the provision whereby children with a statement of SEN could be educated in mainstream schools where a parent wanted it, the SEN provision met the child's needs, and it was compatible with the efficient education for the children with whom the child would be educated and with the efficient use of resources. Warnock (DES, 1978) also suggested that every school should have a special needs teacher and this brought about the appointment of remedial teachers in the 1980s. Support for children with SEN was primarily delivered through withdrawal from class and working on an individual or small group basis.

This approach to the inclusion of children and managing SEN was further enhanced following the introduction of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 and the supporting Code of Practice (DENI, 1998) (Code) which formally introduced the role of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) in Northern Ireland. This was a substantial change from the remedial teacher approach, where the SENCO would now be responsible for co-ordinating the schools SEN provision.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (SENDO) advanced the inclusion agenda even further through strengthening the rights of children and young people with SEN to attend mainstream schools, prohibiting disability discrimination and requiring that all schools have accessibility plans for accessing the premises, the curriculum and information. The introduction of SENDO was supported by a Supplement to the Code which provided schools and others with practical guidance aimed at promoting improvement in inclusive practices, to assist schools and Boards make effective decisions and to encourage schools to develop a whole school acceptance of including children with SEN in the work and life of school.

It is evident that the changes in legislation have led to a climate of change for schools in the diversity of pupil being enrolled in schools and the need to develop, review and evaluate cultures, policies and practices to create a willingness to embrace all pupils as an integral part of school life.

### **The Changing Role of the SENCO**

The role of the SENCO has also changed: the SENCO is now required to develop a knowledge, understanding and range of skills to co-ordinate SEN in schools.

Winter and Kilpatrick (1999) reported how in Northern Ireland the Code (1998) "established a pivotal role for SENCOS" (p180) causing them to change their role. Montgomery (2007) argued that following the introduction of the Code, the SENCO had "to embrace a number of new roles to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in each of the key areas of SEN co-ordination: strategic direction and development of provision in each school, learning and teaching,

leading and managing staff and efficient and effective deployment of staff and resources" (p46).

## **The Role of the SENCO**

Whilst the Code (1998) is not a legal document, schools and boards must have 'regard' to it. It provides schools with a structured framework in which to operate in the identification and assessment of those children who present with SEN (Education (NI) Order, (1996) Article 4(2) and Code (1998), p1).

In all mainstream schools, a designated teacher should be responsible for:

- the day to day operation of the school's special educational needs policy;
- responding to requests for advice from other teachers;
- co-ordinate SEN provision, including, in secondary schools, ensuring appropriate liaison with the various teachers who will teach any given child with special educational needs;
- maintain a SEN register, with records on pupils with special educational needs;
- liaison with parents of children with special educational needs;
- establishing the SEN in-service training requirements of the staff, and contributing as appropriate to their training;
- liaison with external agencies. (DENI, 1998, p7).

Each of these responsibilities are explored in the following chapters in some detail to provide some suggestions of good practices as to meet effectively those responsibilities and further advance inclusive practice in schools.

## 1. To co-ordinate the day to day operation of the school's special educational needs policy

The overall responsibility for SEN in a school rests with the Board of Governors. (BOG). One of the ways the BOG have found it useful to drive good practice for SEN and inclusion is to have a governor responsible for SEN. In cases where this takes place, the governor maintains a watching brief on all aspects of SEN and inclusion and may challenge practice ensuring the SEN and inclusion agenda remains at the forefront of school thinking.

- Specific responsibilities for SEN are delegated to the principal and the SENCO to ensure the day to day operation of the schools SEN policy is embedded in practice.
- In keeping with an inclusive ethos there should be a whole school approach to SEN and inclusion. That means every teacher needs to be made aware that they have a professional responsibility to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEN and/or disability. [See the Role of the Teacher in the Leadership and Management section of this file.]
- A whole school approach enhances the capacity of the school to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The SENCO should work in a co-ordinating role; this means **co-ordinating**, rather than having total responsibility, for the identification, assessment and provision of SEN and inclusion.
- In order to inform the day to day operation of SEN, it will be necessary for the SENCO to understand the process for identification and assessment of SEN and how that process operates within the school for meeting the needs of pupils with SEN. This is best achieved using a self - evaluative approach, which may include undertaking audits, for example the Quality Indicators for the Work of the Special Education Needs

Co-ordinator, which are in the following section or a SWOT analysis.

**SWOT** – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats  
(See links in Further Information section)

- One of the first tasks a newly appointed SENCO often wishes to undertake is reviewing the school's SEN Policy. It is recommended that this should only happen where detailed audits have taken place and where the SENCO has had at least a year to become familiar with the current policy and practice in school, and with all operational aspects of the role.

The following case study exemplifies how a primary school SENCO became aware of the need to understand the day to day operation of the school before becoming involved in more strategic issues such as policy development:

### Case Study - A New Primary SENCO

I was appointed to the role of SENCO in January 2011 after 22 years teaching experience. At first I wanted to start with revising the school's SEN policy. However, I soon realised that I did not know enough about the role to do this. There was also an expectation on me to start taking groups of pupils from the mainstream teachers for withdrawal support.

On taking advice, the starting point for me was to consider which model of SEN I wished to operate in school. I recognised that continuing to do things the way they had been was grounded in the medical model and I wanted to base my practice on the school improvement model.

I wanted to take time to get to know the children whose names were recorded on the SEN Register. Many of the names have been registered for a long time. I

negotiated with teachers to conduct a series of in class observations to focus on the children's learning and see where their strengths and areas for development lay, and any environmental considerations that could be identified as 'barriers' to learning.

My next step was to hold detailed discussions with the teachers and see answers to a number of questions which included:-

- ▶ When did the pupil's difficulties arise – at specific days or times of the day or during certain subjects?
- ▶ What exactly was the difficulty?
- ▶ What data was available to inform decision making, including standardised scores from tests?
- ▶ How was the child's performance in relation to his/her chronological age and his/her peers?
- ▶ To what extent did teacher preparation and planning take account of differentiation and personalised targets for the child?
- ▶ What strategies had been tried, what had worked and what had not worked?
- ▶ What training had the teacher received in relation to meeting the specific needs of the individual child?
- ▶ What training requirements existed for the teacher (and classroom assistants where there was one in class)?
- ▶ What type of intervention was most appropriate for the child – in-class, groupwork, or withdrawal?
- ▶ Where withdrawal was to be offered, was this going to be over a short, medium or long term period?



- ▶ What was the focus of intervention going to be?

Once the answers were available, the teacher and I jointly wrote the individualised Education Plan for the child, ensuring that the targets could be addressed in class, at home and also through withdrawal support. In cases where an external agency was involved, discussion also took place to ensure that a unified approach to addressing the child's needs was in place.

It was only after my involvement in one small aspect of the SEN provision within my school that I realised the need to further explore the current policy and practice before embarking on a full review of the school's SEN policy.

- SENCOs should understand that policy formulation is a collaborative whole school process. The best school policies are produced through a process of consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. When members of the school community operate as a team, they feel involved, valued, and are committed to the successful implementation of the policies.
- SENCOs may take a lead role in co-ordinating the formulation of the SEN / inclusion policy and should follow the process for development (4 stage cycle) as recommended in the School Improvement (NI) Programme (DENI, 1998).
  1. Review and Assessment Stage.
  2. Targeting Setting Stage.
  3. Action Planning Stage.
  4. Implementation and Evaluation Stage.
- SENCOs should understand that the SEN policy is statutory.

- SENCOs should understand that the SEN policy should be part of a suite of school policies and not seen as a stand alone policy. Where possible, links should be made to other relevant policies, both curricular and pastoral to reflect the ethos of the school.

## 2. To be responsive to requests for advice from other teachers

- The SENCO should consider carefully any requests for advice from teachers. While a SENCO does not need to know the answer to everything to do with SEN, support can be given to their colleagues by seeking information and providing direction regarding issues raised.
- Consideration should include auditing any training the teachers have had in relation to specific areas and deciding on any training that may be required.
- Teaching and learning is more effective in an appropriate environment, therefore, it may be necessary to consider what barriers to learning exist within structured and unstructured areas throughout the school. There is also a need to make reasonable adjustments/accessibility plans.
- Before making a referral to the SENCO, teachers should be encouraged to implement and keep a record of a range of appropriate teaching and learning strategies aimed at helping overcome difficulties a child may be facing, including those identified in the Good Practice Guidelines For Schools To Meet The Special Educational Needs Of Pupils At The School Based Stages Of The Code Of Practice, (ELBs 2009). These Guidelines act as a useful reference point for teachers and SENCOs in determining strategies or reasonable adjustments that can be made to assist in improving the progress of a child with SEN.
- It is important that the SENCO supports teachers in meeting their training needs.

- The SENCO should develop his/her own role, knowledge and credibility through undertaking research in the context of professional reflective practice. (ETI, 2005; GTCNI, 2007).
- The SENCO should also appreciate the importance of self-evaluation as highlighted through the Every School a Good School policy (DE, 2009) and Together Towards Improvement. (ETI, 2011).

**3. To co-ordinate SEN provision, including in secondary schools, ensuring appropriate liaison with the various teachers who will teach any given child with special educational needs**

- The SENCO must acknowledge his/her role as a co-ordinator and ensure that class/subject teachers undertake their professional responsibility for the provision for pupils with SEN.
- The SENCO must liaise with the class teacher (primary) or subject teacher (post primary) in the drawing up of the Action Plans or individualised Education Plans (IEPs) in order to ensure that appropriate meaningful targets are set for the pupils by the staff who teach them and understand how best to meet their needs.
- It is sometimes difficult to liaise with perhaps 10 teachers in a post primary school; therefore the SENCO may wish to consider liaising with the English Teacher, Maths Teacher and Form Teacher or Year Head to ensure that a balance of appropriate literacy, numeracy and behaviour targets are included in the IEP.
- The SENCO needs to develop appropriate monitoring arrangements to ensure that IEPs are used effectively and meaningfully to measure progress and raise achievement.
- The SENCO must develop effective reviewing processes; liaise with appropriate staff in reviewing IEPs, evaluating the child's progress and set new targets, as appropriate.

- The SENCO should encourage staff to identify and collate evidence of attainment of targets as part of the monitoring process. Evidence could include mark books, examples of pupils' work and photographs to exemplify targets attained.
- Classroom Assistants or other appropriate support staff should be included where possible in the target setting, monitoring and reviewing of the education planning process.
- The SENCO needs to develop and implement a strategy for sharing information with all other staff regarding SEN issues. Possibilities for doing so include:
  - regular input in INSET days;
  - regular input at staff meetings;
  - having SEN as a standard item on agenda of all departmental meetings;
  - in school online communication; and
  - the development of electronic individualised IEPs where staff monitor and review online and where the SENCO has on-going and continual access to these processes.
- The SENCO should identify a teacher within each large department in post primary schools to act as a link between the SENCO and the teaching and learning in the Department, including providing information on how to meet the specific needs of pupils within a particular area of learning. Ideally this could be a Head of Department (HOD) or to develop expertise other teachers could volunteer for the role on an annual rotational basis. The HOD still needs to ensure that all members of their department maintain their professional responsibilities for managing SEN.

The following case study exemplifies how a post primary school developed better liaison with appropriate staff to meet the needs of pupils with SEN:

## Case Study - IEP Development in a Post Primary School

One of the issues faced by post primary schools is the assumption that the Code of Practice is easier to operate in a primary school than in a large post primary school. Despite this, there is an expectation that all schools should follow the Code. This case study highlights the school improvement process one SENCO led to enhance capacity within the teaching staff in the school.

As part of my Performance Review Staff Development (PRSD) targets, one of the tasks I decided to undertake as a SENCO, was to explore ways in which a whole school approach could be taken to following the Code of Practice to ensure that pupils with SEN were getting the best possible deal.

After securing senior management approval, the starting point was to conduct an audit of all staff to discover what was actually happening. The audit was conducted by means of a short questionnaire to staff which was completed on a closure day in August. A number of issues came to light through the process of analysing questionnaire responses.

- ▶ The responsibility for meeting the needs of pupils with SEN was perceived by the majority of staff as being the sole responsibility of the SENCO.
- ▶ Although staff would have been provided with details of the pupils who were on the SEN register on an annual basis, many staff were unaware of who the pupils were, unless it was immediately obvious.

- Teacher planning did not take account of the needs of pupils with SEN.

Despite the issues identified, the open response area of the questionnaire highlighted a genuine willingness amongst the majority of staff to bring about whole school improvements in this area.

A small working group was established to examine ways in which the issues could be addressed, and one of the preferred options was to utilise the school's ICT resources. Initially the SENCO wrote all the IEPs for the pupils, but this process was changed over the course of a year.

**Step One** involved a process whereby, following training, the responsibility for writing IEPs for pupils at Stage 1-4 of the Code transferred to the Form Tutor, who had pastoral responsibility for the class. (The SENCO continued to write the IEPs for pupils with a Statement of SEN). For the first step, the SENCO and the Form Tutor wrote the plans together.

**Step Two** involved a process whereby the Form Tutor worked with a small group of teachers to write the plans, i.e. English and Maths teachers. This ensured a better balance of literacy, numeracy and behaviour targets. Where amendment was made, the SENCO worked alongside the small group of teachers in a coaching approach to bring about improvement.

**Step Three** was a process whereby the responsibility for writing IEPs was left to the small group of teachers and the SENCO maintained a co-ordinating role and kept a watching brief or monitoring role to ensure consistency and appropriateness. The SENCO continued to write the IEPs for pupils with a Statement of SEN, and this was carried out alongside the classroom assistant for the pupil.

All of the IEPs for every pupil in the school were then placed in a folder on the school's Intranet that only staff had access to. Staff were encouraged to take account of the specific targets that had been established for the pupils in planning and designing their lessons. In the majority of cases the pupil targets were for literacy, numeracy or behaviour.

Senior Management support was in place for the developments taking place, and this included support for the amending of all subject planners to ensure that the extent to which individual pupil needs and objectives were taken account of. An example of this was ensuring that pupils with hearing or visual problems were seated near the front of the class and that the teacher maintained (where possible) face to face contact with the pupils when providing instruction. Another example was for pupils with literacy difficulties where banks of key words that would be used in specialist subjects were provided.

At the end of the year, a further audit was conducted to examine the extent to which the approach had been successful. Once the results were analysed it was clear that improvements had taken place and that in the vast majority of cases, teaching staff had accepted the fact that meeting the needs of pupils with SEN was everyone's responsibility and that their lessons were deemed to be better through ensuring that pupil needs were met.

For the next school year I aim to develop ways in which the pupils can have greater input to the IEP process.

#### 4. To maintain a SEN register, with records on pupils with special educational needs

- The SEN register should only be for the groups outlined in the Code (DENI, 1998, p1) as follows:

*The term "special educational needs" is defined in the legislation as "a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made". "Learning difficulty" means that the child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his or her age, and/or has a disability which hinders his or her use of everyday educational facilities (or, where the child is below school age, would hinder such use if the child were of school age). "Special educational provision" means educational provision which is different from,*

*or additional to, the provision made generally for children of comparable age.*

- Professional judgement is required and the SENCO should encourage teachers to consult with them regarding pupils for whom placement on the register is appropriate.
- The register should include information such as, the pupil name, date of birth, class and the category of SEN as outlined in Guidance for Schools – Recording Children with SEN DE (2005). The pupils needs may fall under the following broad headings:
  - ▶ Cognitive and Learning;
  - ▶ Social, Emotional and Behavioural;
  - ▶ Communication and Interaction;
  - ▶ Sensory;
  - ▶ Physical;
  - ▶ Medical conditions/syndromes;
  - ▶ Other.
- Schools are legally required to inform parents that they are making SEN provision for their child. Good practice would be to put this in writing and seek confirmation from the parent(s) that they have read, understood and are supportive of the school's approach. (SENDO (2005), Article 9).
- A range of approaches, such as how data and teacher observation should be used to identify pupils whose names should be recorded on the SEN register.



- Schools may also wish to have a register for those pupils with medical or health related difficulties which may not impact on pupil learning. Further information is available from Supporting Pupils with Medication Needs, DE (2008).
- To facilitate the wide diversity of pupils, some schools have found it useful to also maintain a register of other supported groups, for example newcomer children; Gifted and Talented (CCEA, 2008).
- Where pupils' names are added to the register it is imperative that the provision is available in school to meet their needs.
- Once a pupils' name is recorded on the register, an Action Plan (at Stage 1 of the COP) or IEP (at Stages 2-5 of the Code) should be developed, written and reviewed regularly. In most cases, schools find that a termly or twice a year review of progress against the targets set in the Action Plan or IEP is appropriate; this will depend on the individual pupil needs and efficient use of resources.
- It is imperative that the child (subject to their age and understanding) has a voice in the process of establishing and reviewing their IEP (UN, 1989 and 2008).
- Where the child has a statement of special educational needs or an educational psychologists report at stage 3 of the Code, the objectives should be reflected in the IEP.
- Data should be used alongside appropriate provision to ensure that pupils whose names are recorded on the SEN register make appropriate progress.
- The C2K SIMS system has a specific area for the recording of pupils on the SEN register. Where possible this should be used to aid the completion of the annual school census.

- The SEN register should be updated regularly to accurately reflect the number of pupils with SEN and/or disability in the school.
- In line with guidance under Co-ordinating SEN provision, regular reviews should be held to ensure that the provision being made for pupils on the register continues to be appropriate.
- In addition to maintaining the school's SEN register, it is important that the SENCO takes account of the need to also maintain a number of other records.

## Good Practice: Record Keeping

Record keeping is important in order that:

- ▶ a child's academic progress/achievements can be monitored;
- ▶ a record of any concerns about a child's safety / welfare is maintained;
- ▶ a record of the school's involvement with the pupil and with parents/carers is available;
- ▶ school accountability and responsibility is taken account of;
- ▶ continuity is maintained if a change of staff takes place;
- ▶ Should an appeal be made that the school has the information to respond;
- ▶ records keep the child's SEN data together; and
- ▶ relevant and reliable information is easily accessible.

The records maintained on a pupil with SEN and/or disability will vary, depending upon the individual needs of the pupil and the available school resources. The following list provides an exemplar as to what should be considered:-

- ▶ the SEN Register;
- ▶ individualised Education Plans and Reviews at relevant stages of the Code;
- ▶ exemplars of pupils work from each term. In Numeracy and Literacy, and relevant subsets, e.g. Talking and Listening, Shape and Space etc.;
- ▶ copies of all correspondence;
- ▶ reports;
- ▶ test results and papers;
- ▶ minutes of meetings;?]
- ▶ incident reports; and
- ▶ anything else the SENCO feels is relevant or important.

If the pupil has an educational psychology report available at Stage 3, or a Statement of SEN at Stage 5 of the COP, these should also be maintained, along with annual review or transition plan documentation.

To maintain an overview of planning for individual pupils with SEN, schools have found it useful to adopt a log file approach as illustrated below:-

Pupil: John Jones		Class: 2	COP Stage: 5	Year: 2010-2011
Date	Time	Member(s) of Staff involved	Notes	Action Required
24/11/10	10.30	Ms Topley, SENCO	Call from Mrs Jones – requested meeting to discuss John's problems with homework	Arranged meeting for 27/11/10 at 3.30
27/11/10	3.30	Mr Ryan (Principal)	Ms Topley, SENCO Meeting with Mrs Jones and John. Discussed homework difficulties and possible ways forward. Agreed that John would join homework club each day after school for 15 minutes and that Mrs Jones would check John's homework each afternoon.	Copy of notes of meeting requested by Mrs Jones – send by post on 28/11/10

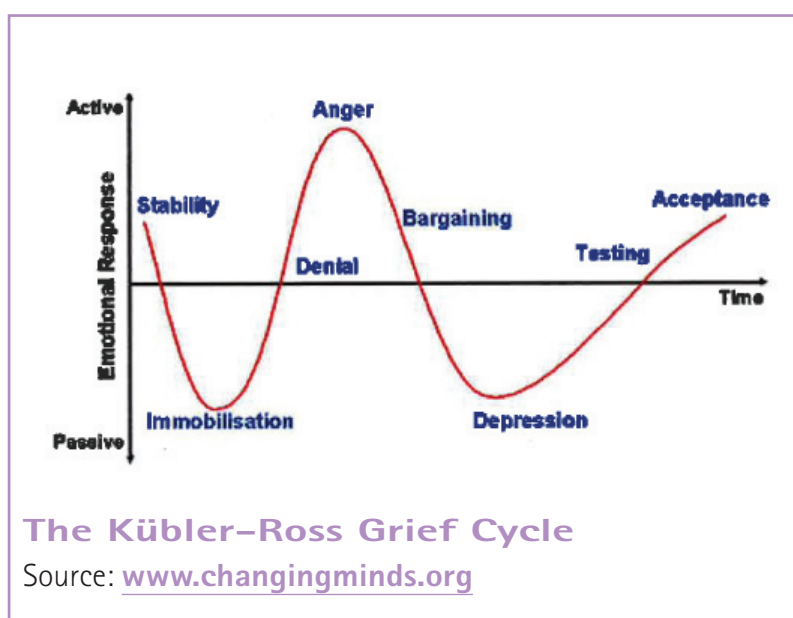
Other considerations have to be taken on board in relation to record keeping:-

- ▶ Data Protection Act 1998 – individuals have a right to see any information held on them;
- ▶ Freedom of Information Act 2000 – members of the public can request copies of schools policies;
- ▶ Confidentiality – all SEN information must be securely maintained in school and pupil's must not be discussed in public places;
- ▶ Records should be held for a period of 7 years after a young person has reached the upper limit of school attendance.

## 5. To liaise with parents of children with special educational needs

Guidance on Partnership with Parents is included in paragraphs 2.21 to 2.27 of the SEN Code of Practice and further guidance included in paragraphs 1.13 to 1.17 of the Supplement to the SEN Code of Practice.

- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order (SENDI) 2005 states that where a school is making special educational provision for a pupil that the parents should be notified. (SENDI Article 9). Good practice would be to put this in writing and seek confirmation from the parent(s) that they have read, understood and are supportive of the school's approach.
- On occasions, parents may not have come to the realisation that their child has special educational needs, and a sensitive approach is required by the SENCO. Some SENCOs have found it useful to refer to the Kübler-Ross Grief Cycle (shown below) to help them understand the stages that a parent may go through when coming to terms with their situation. This understanding will enable the SENCO to adjust their approach accordingly when liaising with the parent.



- Whilst parental permission is not required for a school to place a child's name on the SEN register, good practice suggests that a partnership approach be adopted.
- In all cases the school should remember that the rights of the child are paramount (Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995). (Stationery Office, 1995).
- Outcomes for pupils with special educational needs have been found to be better where all stakeholders have worked together.
- In cases where a child requires out of school provision, for example, speech and language therapy, a good relationship with the parent should be maintained as it may be the parent has to provide transport and also inform the school of the programme being followed.
- Liaising with parents can be done in a number of ways, for example through parent-teacher interviews, informal discussions pre and after school, appointments, parents evenings, written communication (newsletters, email etc.), telephone, school website etc. Schools should have clear concern/complaints procedures for all children and in particular for pupils with SEN and/or disability.

## Good Practice - Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

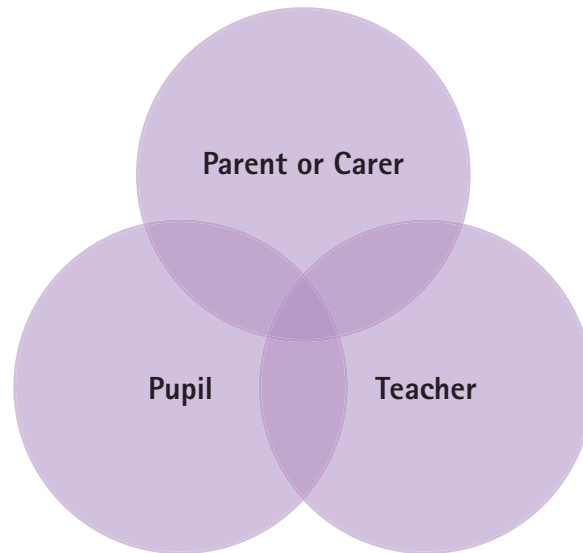
### Families in the 21st Century

- Studies from the European Union would suggest that the stereotypical notion of 'the family' (two married parents of the opposite sex with two children) is a reality for only one family in seven in the European Union. (Carpenter, 2008). Educators should take this into account when thinking about their understanding of the definition of a family.
- It has been suggested that professionals struggle to include families at the most basic levels, let alone to implement not only relational but also participatory, family centred practices (Carpenter and Towers, 2008, p139).
- Research by Carpenter (2002) discovered that when it came to annual reviews that schools had the expectation that only mothers should attend and they were given little if any notice of the meeting. Many fathers of children with statements would welcome the opportunity to attend.
- Mitchell (2008, p127 & p130) found that:-
  - ▶ 1 in 5 children under 16 years are looked after by grandparents during the daytime.
  - ▶ There has been little research on grandparent support in families.
  - ▶ For schools, intergenerational learning provides an important mechanism to extend school/home links and draw home learning into the classroom.

### Enhancing the Partnership Role

- It is important to believe in the merits of working with parents and carers as equal partners to enhance relationships.
- SENCOs should be **welcoming, communicative, involved** and **responsive**;
  - ▶ it teaches parents to be responsible;
  - ▶ it supports parents with their child at home;
  - ▶ it gives teachers more information about children they teach; and
  - ▶ it breaks down barriers between home and school.
- Actively listen to the parents.
- Use empathy and try to understand – what stage of the grief cycle they may be at, and how should the SENCO respond.
- Don't pretend to be an expert - remember – the parent knows the child better than the teacher.
- The parent may have more knowledge of the special needs of the child than the SENCO.

The following diagram which illustrates 'circles of success' acts as a reminder that the child learns best when the three main partners are working together in harmony:



- 6. To establish the SEN in-service training requirements of the staff, and contributing as appropriate to their training**
- Within the inclusive education and school improvement model this is one of the most important roles for the SENCO. This will contribute to building the capacity of teachers to meet a wider range of pupil needs.
  - A register should be maintained of expertise teachers may have, and all training that has taken place in relation to special educational needs and inclusion for teachers and classroom assistants. This may include accredited courses, for example a MEd in Inclusion, and In-service education and training (INSET).
  - An annual audit should take place to address a number of areas, to ensure that:
    - teachers have the necessary expertise or training to meet the full range of pupil needs;



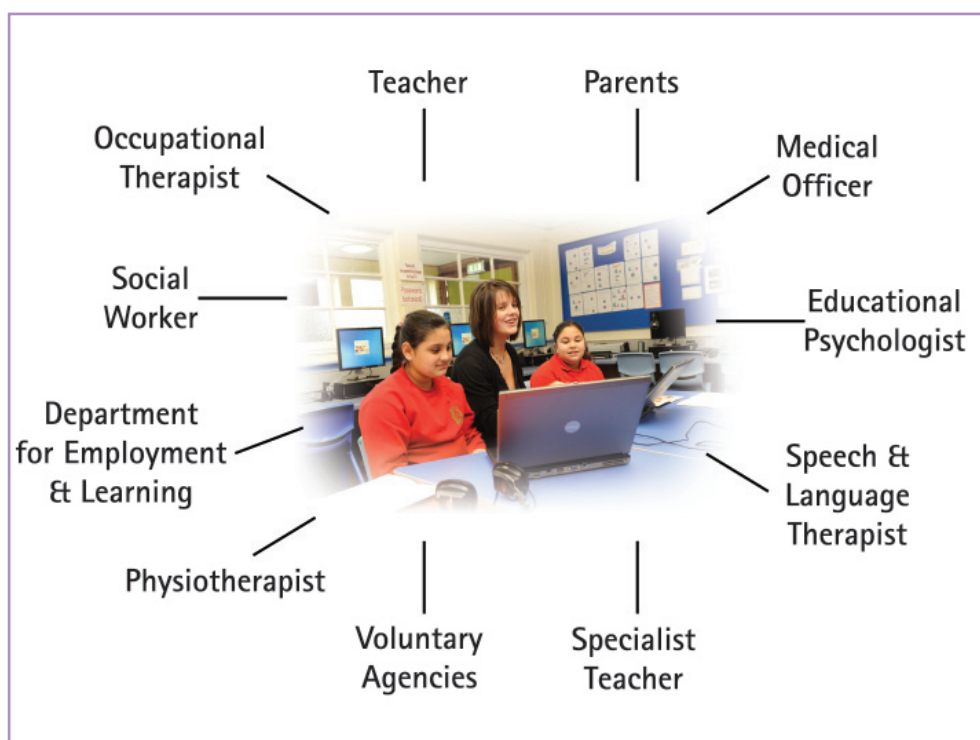
- ▶ priorities are identified which will, in turn, feed into the school development plan;
  - ▶ all staff become more self-reflective;
  - ▶ all the good work that is taking place is affirmed;
  - ▶ school strengths and areas for improvement are identified;
  - ▶ opportunities for monitoring, evaluation and review are in place; and
  - ▶ data are up to date.
- It is recognised that for some SENCOs, leading and managing training may prove to be a daunting task, however, the SENCO can commission training from other providers.
  - There are a range of training methods available, for example coaching, counselling, mentoring, presentation and online. SENCOs should co-ordinate whatever type is appropriate to the needs of the individual and school and contribute as appropriate.

## **7. To liaise with external agencies**

Effective action on behalf of children with special educational needs will often depend upon close co-operation between education and health and social services, who have statutory duties to help each other. Each Trust should have a designated officer to act as point of reference in dealing with parents, officers of ELBs and other professionals. The SEN Code of Practice paragraphs 2.31 to 2.40 provides guidance for schools in relation to Child Health Services and Social Services. It is important that the SENCO is fully conversant with that guidance.

There can be a wide range of external agencies involved with children with SEN and/or disability. These include Educational Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist; Educational Welfare Officer, Statement(ing) Officer; Senior Clinical Medical

Officer; Consultant Community Paediatrician; Speech and Language Therapist; Nurse; Occupational Therapist; Physiotherapist; Transitions Officer, Careers Officer and Social Worker.



### **Considerations when working with other professionals**

- Other professionals are not governed by timetables (like schools) – this has implications for arranging times for meeting or phone calls.
- Terms and Conditions of Employment vary.
- Holidays may be able to be taken in term time and they may not be available.
- Shortages exist in some professions and difficulties may be faced during recruitment.
- Other professionals may not understand teaching.
- Other professionals are expert in areas where teachers are not. It is important to consider their advice.
- Other professionals may insist upon different modes of titles or address (this may have implications for meetings and for minutes).
- A flexible approach that draws on a wide range of expertise is best.
- Try to develop positive working partnerships. It may be an idea to discuss how collaboration should take place in advance.
- It is useful to create a list of relevant external agencies which contains names, roles, addresses and phone numbers.
- SENCOs should consider the following advice in relation to managing meetings with anyone, including external agencies:

## Good Practice - Managing Meetings

There will be many meetings for a SENCO to manage. Examples may include informal discussions with class teachers through to formal meetings such as an Annual Review for a pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The following points provide some considerations that the SENCO should take account of when planning for and conducting meetings:

### Planning a Meeting

- ▶ Decide if a meeting is the best way to address the issue – would a letter or an email be a better approach.
- ▶ Decide on the purpose of the meeting, e.g. Annual Review, IEP establishment, IEP Review.
- ▶ Decide who needs to attend – don't just invite everyone who has ever had anything to do with a pupil.
- ▶ Establish a date and time - use attendance grid to find the best date and time that suits everyone. Software can assist with this, (for example Meet-O-Matic).
- ▶ Decide on an appropriate length of time for the meeting and stick to it.
- ▶ Think about access arrangements for people attending who may have a disability.

A sample attendance grid is provided below:

Required Attendees	Monday 7/2/11			Thursday 10/2/11	Friday 11/2/11	Monday 14/2/11
	9.00-9.30	10.00-10.30	3.30-4.00	3.30-4.00	8.30-9.00	10.00-10.30
John Jones (pupil)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ms Topley (SENCO)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mr Ryan (Principal)				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mrs Jones (Mum)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mrs Nelson (Educational Psychologist)	Not available during these times but agreed to forward a report					

In this case, the best time for a meeting is Monday 14/2/11 at 10.00-10.30

### Agenda Issues

- ▶ Try to offer attendees the opportunity to contribute to the agenda by (5 days before).
- ▶ Try to avoid situations where agendas or papers are being introduced on the day of the meeting.
- ▶ When organising an Annual Review, the timescales for notification are covered by regulation and timescales are outlined for notification and issue of documentation. Education and Library Boards have guidance for schools on this.

## Good Practice - Managing Meetings

### Managing the Meeting

- ▶ Choose a venue suitable for the purpose of the meeting as getting the wrong venue can annoy attendees.
- ▶ If the school is large – do participants know how to get from the entrance to where the meeting is taking place?
- ▶ Offering coffee is a good way to diffuse difficult situations.
- ▶ Consider a neutral venue (some parents don't like schools).
- ▶ Think about issues such as seating and tables – formal or informal, lighting, heat, noise, clutter, and interruptions.
- ▶ Ensure the venue is welcoming – try and avoid showing parents that 'pre-meetings' have taken place, introduce all present, outline management arrangements for the meeting (length of time, purpose, how long people will be allowed to speak for, who is the chair and secretary etc).
- ▶ In difficult situations – employ active listening skills and maintain a focus on solutions rather than problems.
- ▶ When chairing – summarise what has been said and what has been agreed, ensure that all participants are clear.

### Minutes

- ▶ It can be frustrating having to write up minutes of meetings. A different approach is to take notes of a meeting using a grid as illustrated below:

No	Agenda Item	Discussion and points agreed	Actions
1	Welcome and introductions	Chair introduced all present Agreed that first names would be used	
2	Notes of previous meeting	Agreed as accurate	
3	Actions from previous meeting	All complete	
4	Concerns about learning	Examples outlined of where teachers were concerned; Discussed strategies that had been tried at stages 1 and 2 of COP; Discussed possible referral to educational psychology; Mum uncertain about this but agreed to think about and let SENCO know on Monday.	Issue notes of meeting to Mum  Follow up phone call to mum
5	Summary	Chair summarised discussion and what had been agreed	
6	Follow up meeting	To be arranged following mum's decision as appropriate.	

- ▶ Keep notes brief and to the point.
- ▶ Ensure that the notes are issued within the time period promised.

- In addition to working with external specialists, SENCOs may also wish to collaborate with other schools. The introduction of the Entitlement Framework means that post primary schools will already have established links with other schools. A number of special schools are active in supporting pupils with SEN and/or disabilities in mainstream schools. It is likely that there is further scope for development, as was highlighted by ETI (2006, p11):

*Special schools, in the future, will be expected to provide a range of interventions which address low support needs, commonly occurring needs, rarely occurring needs, and high support needs.*

*All special schools should have a major supporting role in the assessment of a pupil's needs and the preparation of individual intervention plans. Educational plans, of necessity, should contain an inclusion statement identifying the experiences and resources available to support the education of pupils with SEN. Intervention should be matched to the categories of support and monitored as the assessment indicates.*

- SENCOs in mainstream schools are encouraged to establish links with local special schools. The links should be seen as a two-way process:
  - ▶ inclusion can be enhanced through greater interaction between mainstream and special school pupils;
  - ▶ mainstream capacity to meet the needs of pupils can be developed;
  - ▶ specialist expertise in meeting the needs of pupils with SEN and/or disability can be shared from the special school; and
  - ▶ specialist curriculum expertise can be shared with the mainstream school.

- In post-primary schools, there are now more opportunities than existed previously through Area Learning Communities (ALCs) for working partnerships between mainstream and special schools as established through the Entitlement Framework.
- In addition to the requirements for the SENCO from the SEN Code of Practice (1998), there are a number of other areas through which the learning support capacity of a school can be enhanced, and these are considered in the next section.

## **Enhancing Learning Support Capacity in Schools**

### Leadership and Management of SEN and Inclusion

Models of inclusion have evolved over a number of years; the **medical model** sees the pupil with SEN as being the problem and the expectation is that s/he needs to change and adapt to circumstances that are presented to her/him with no acknowledgement that society needs to change. In the **social model** schools are encouraged to identify the barriers to achievement and seek to address these along with developing the whole pupil. The **school improvement model** suggests that where a pupil with SEN and or disability fails to thrive in a school, that the focus should be improving the school to impact on meeting the needs of the pupil.

A number of questions can then be asked -

- Which model is currently operating within our school?
- How do we know?
- Which is the preferred model for our school to further enhance inclusion?
- What would this look like in our school?

- What needs to be changed at whole school level to ensure the new model is working?
- What timescale is needed for the change?

### Managing Change

The most recent role of the SENCO is to manage inclusion (Feldman and Khademian, 2007), another consideration is that the SENCO should also be a manager of productive change (Fullan, 1993). Fullan (1994) also suggests that effective managers are those who can manage change as change is the only constant; therefore it is important that the SENCO embraces their changing role to include being a manager of change.

To enable this to happen effectively, the SENCO should ideally be a member of the school's senior management team, where they have the opportunity to provide regular updates on the theme of school improvement through inclusive practice. It would also be preferable that the SENCO should work closely with the governor responsible for SEN.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) has produced new quality indicators for the work of the SENCO as part of the Together Towards Improvement (TTI) documentation. These indicators are in the following section and can be used to enable the SENCO to audit their practice within the school, so that they can develop their role regarding:

- where they currently are;
- where they need to be; and
- what they need to do to get there.

This process would enable the SENCO to continually manage change and take cognisance of future developments.



## Summary

This chapter aims to contribute to the continual professional development for SENCOs and to aid in the development of a SENCO's knowledge, understanding and skills at both operational and strategic levels.

Suggestions have been made to enable the SENCO to carry out the role efficiently and effectively and also to further enhance capacity to ensure inclusive cultures, policies and practice within schools.

SENCOs should find the information in this chapter beneficial in adequately preparing them for the challenges ahead through being an agent of change, a reflective practitioner, self-evaluative and taking a professional responsibility for continuous professional development, through a research based approach to school improvement.

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## Further Information

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Guidance for writing IEPs	Ryan, D. (2010) <i>Getting Smarter: Teacher Guidance for Writing Individual Education Plans and Targets for pupils with Special Educational Needs</i> . LULU Press. <a href="http://www.lulu.com">www.lulu.com</a>
Ryan Inclusion analysis (v4)	(Forthcoming)
The Inclusion Quality Mark	<a href="http://www.inclusionmark.co.uk/">http://www.inclusionmark.co.uk/</a>
Index for Inclusion	<a href="http://www.csie.org.uk/publications/inclusion-index-explained.shtml">http://www.csie.org.uk/publications/inclusion-index-explained.shtml</a>
Quality Indicators for the work of the SENCO	<a href="http://etini.gov.uk">http://etini.gov.uk</a>
Together Towards Improvement (TTI)	<a href="http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement.htm">http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement.htm</a>
SWOT Analysis	<a href="http://www.quickmba.com/strategy/swot/">http://www.quickmba.com/strategy/swot/</a>
Meet-O-Matic (meeting attendance software)	<a href="http://www.meetomatic.com">www.meetomatic.com</a>

## Acknowledgements

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# The Quality Indicators for the Work of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators



Department of  
**Education**

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## TOGETHER TOWARDS IMPROVEMENT

### Special Educational Needs and Improvement in Mainstream Schools

#### OVERVIEW

*'All children and young people are entitled to education of the highest quality which enables them to develop as individuals and gain skills, knowledge and understanding.'*<sup>1</sup>

Inspection findings indicate that increasing numbers of young learners present with educational, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and schools struggle to engage them appropriately, or at all, in the life and curriculum of the school: low and underachievement is particularly evident among this group. With many of our school-aged learners experiencing some form of learning difficulty for short or longer periods of their school career, bringing about improvement is the responsibility of all schools, their leadership and management team, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) as well as those involved in teacher education and support.

Of the many ways of bringing about improvement in the quality of the provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN), a central element is a set of SEN quality indicators with which to review the effectiveness of the provision.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Vulnerable Children and Young Adults Survey 2008 (ETI)*

The publication of this document provides one resource to guide classroom and school planning for effective support for pupils who require additional help with their learning. At a basic level, the indicators identified in this document provide examples of guidance and effective practice to enable professional discussion around the self-evaluation process in schools and ultimately, improvement in the quality of the learners' experiences and outcomes, and the standards they achieve.

The indicators are written to assist schools to probe the effectiveness of all of the staff in ensuring that pupils remain on roll, engage with learning and benefit from the life and work of the school, achieving academically and socially from the experience of attending school and learning alongside others.

The performance indicators detailed below are written to provide schools with the benchmarks against which they can audit, plan and evaluate the quality of their provision for pupils with special educational needs.

The indicators are based on ETI's Together Towards Improvement (TTI) document format and are self-evaluation tools which follow the same structure and format. These indicators should be used alongside TTI.

It is intended that schools will use the indicators to improve their provision by:

- auditing practice in the provision of SEN at a whole school level;
- assessing the quality of the outcomes for learners with SEN;
- analysing the SEN data;
- determining appropriate SEN resources and workforce training; and
- monitoring and quality assuring SEN provision over time.

The outcome of such work can inform the school development and improvement plan.

The indicators are grouped under the headings as set out below:

1. Quality of Leadership and Management
2. Quality of Provision for Learning
3. Quality of Achievements and Standards

The quality indicators relate to three key questions namely;

1. How effective are leadership and management, \*\* in raising achievement and supporting learners with SEN?
2. How effective is the quality of provision for learners with SEN?
3. How well do the learners with SEN develop and achieve?

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*\*\*The role and responsibility of the SENCO differs from school to school, in some schools the SENCO will be part of the senior team and in some not. The document endeavours to recognise the range of the arrangements.*

## Summary of Sections

### 1. HOW EFFECTIVE ARE THE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND THE SENCO IN RAISING ACHIEVEMENT AND SUPPORTING LEARNERS WITH SEN?

- 1.1 Strategic leadership
- 1.2 Action to promote improvement
- 1.3 Staffing
- 1.4 Accommodation and physical resources
- 1.5 Links and Partnerships
- 1.6 Equality of opportunity, diversity and good relations
- 1.7 Public value

### 2. HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNERS WITH SEN?

- 2.1 Planning
- 2.2 Teaching and learning
- 2.3 Assessment
- 2.4 Curriculum provision
- 2.5 Learning experiences
- 2.6 Pastoral care
- 2.7 Safeguarding
- 2.8 Additional learning support
- 2.9 Careers education, information, advice and guidance

### 3. HOW WELL DO THE LEARNERS WITH SEN DEVELOP AND ACHIEVE?

- 3.1 Achievements
- 3.2 Dispositions and capabilities
- 3.3 Progression
- 3.4 Overcoming barriers

1. Quality of Leadership and Management		
<p><b>Q. How effective are the leadership and management, and/or the SENCO in raising achievement and supporting learners with SEN?</b></p>		
<p><b>1.1 Strategic Leadership</b></p> <p>How effective are the SENCO and/or senior leadership, including the governing body, in providing strategic leadership and clear direction in achieving high quality education for learners with SEN?</p>	<p>Evaluate the extent to which the SENCO and/or leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• treat SEN as a whole school matter, and ensure that all school policies and development plans take due cognisance of the range of age and ability represented by the school's enrolment;</li> <li>• have adopted appropriate priorities and improvement plans for SEN, based on an effective review and analysis of provision, and the systematic tracking of the progress of individual learners;</li> <li>• have in place (a) effective strategies for the early identification of special needs and for early intervention to address needs, whether short or longer term, and (b) procedures for accessing and integrating external support as necessary;</li> <li>• create an environment, in which learners of whatever age, feel confident, included, and supported in their learning, and ready to move to the next stage of their education when that time comes; and</li> <li>• have in place effective open communication internally, (among all staff who teach/support each individual learner with SEN and with learners themselves), and externally, (with parents, governors and support services).</li> </ul>	<p>Sources of Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School/SEN development/action plan</li> <li>• Appropriate policies (SEN/assessment)</li> <li>• In-set records relating to SEN capacity building</li> <li>• Individual progress records</li> <li>• Financial allocation and workforce deployment</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development

1. Quality of Leadership and Management		
Q. How effective are the leadership and management, and/or the SENCO in raising achievement and supporting learners with SEN?		
1.2 Action to Promote Improvement	Evaluate the extent to which the SENCO and/or leadership:	Sources of Evidence
How effective are the SENCO and/or senior leadership in the use of self-evaluation leading to improvement, in the quality of provision for learners with SEN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a clear overview of the scope and quality of the support for learners with SEN, whether provided internally or externally;</li> <li>• ensure that there is rigorous self-evaluation at all levels, and that it is underpinned by systematic observation and monitoring of the learners' progress, and the effective analysis and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative measures of the achievements of learners with SEN;</li> <li>• ensure that the school development plan (SDP) includes steps to build the capacity of staff to meet the range of SEN and inclusion issues presented by the learners; and</li> <li>• have in place effective steps to ensure continuity, coherence and consistency in the learners' learning and individual programmes, both within and across classes;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit data for SEN</li> <li>• Self evaluation material indicating analysis of SEN information and provision</li> <li>• School development plan</li> <li>• Records of the use and impact of external services</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development



1. Quality of Leadership and Management		
Q. How effective are the leadership and management, and/or the SENCO in raising achievement and supporting learners with SEN?		
1.3 Staffing	Evaluate the extent to which the SENCO and/or leadership ensure:	Sources of Evidence
<p>How effective are the SENCO and/or senior leadership in recruiting, deploying, supporting and developing staff, at all levels, to provide high quality education for learners with SEN?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the staff complement includes adequate, suitably qualified and experienced staff to meet the range of learning support required by the learners;</li> <li>• the staff development programme includes a quality induction programme for new staff, and opportunities for all staff, including classroom assistants, to develop experience and expertise in working across the range of learning needs represented in the school's enrolment;</li> <li>• the SENCO and/or leadership team keep up-to-date with relevant educational research, continually review their own pedagogical practice, and ensure that there is opportunity to share and learn from good practice;</li> <li>• classroom assistants are deployed flexibly and effectively, and contribute to the observation and monitoring of the learners' progress, to lesson plans, and to the assessment of the learners with whom they work;</li> <li>• in the case of young children, there is a clearly defined role for each child's key worker to make additional observations, and monitor progress and development, especially where initial concerns have been raised; and</li> <li>• any external support provided, addresses a specific, assessed need of a learner or group of learners, and that the external support is also targeted on building the capacity of the staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff profile</li> <li>• Staff deployment records</li> <li>• Staff discussion/ Minutes</li> <li>• Induction programme and overview</li> <li>• SEN policy rationale and review information</li> <li>• Individual tracking of individual progress</li> <li>• Induction /in- set SEN programme</li> <li>• Coordinator/ department records of meetings and actions</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development

1. Quality of Leadership and Management		
Q. How effective are the leadership and management, and/or the SENCO in raising achievement and supporting learners with SEN?		
1.4 Accommodation and Physical Resources	Evaluate the extent to which the SENCO and/or leadership ensure that:	Sources of Evidence
How effective are the SENCO and/or senior leadership leaders in the deployment of all resources to provide high quality education for those learners with SEN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the physical environment (including the school grounds) and resources are fit for purpose, accessible and SENDO compliant, that the school is making effective use of what is available, and meets the curricular, developmental, pastoral and social needs of the learners;</li> <li>there are varied, adequate and where necessary, adapted resources (e.g. technology, print-based, other equipment) to support the learning and teaching programmes of learners with SEN;</li> <li>the accommodation and facilities include a quiet space or spaces to meet the pastoral needs of individual learners and enable one-to-one mentoring sessions; and</li> <li>the available resources are used effectively and efficiently, and their use is appropriately monitored.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation and SENDO (Special Educational Needs and Disability Order 2005) records</li> <li>Inventory of ICT hard and soft ware</li> <li>School SEN resources</li> <li>Pupil awareness of dedicated space and use made of it</li> <li>Budget allocation and use</li> <li>Records of liaison with external support agencies</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development

1. Quality of Leadership and Management		
Q. How effective are the leadership and management, and/or the SENCO in raising achievement and supporting learners with SEN?		
<p>1.5 Links and Partnerships</p> <p>How effective are the links and partnerships, with parents, other providers (including youth sector schools), other agencies and employers, and the wider community, to identify and to meet the current and future needs of learners with SEN?</p>	<p>Evaluate the extent to which the SENCO and/or leadership ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in the case of young children, appropriate focus is placed on gathering background information on the family, as part of the settling in process</li> <li>• effective partnerships are established with parents to help promote their child's learning in school and at home, and to contribute to the development of their child's individual learning plan and annual review process;</li> <li>• relevant information is exchanged among professionals, (including health professionals,) to ensure continuity and progression in the learners' learning and pastoral care, including at key transition stages, and when additional support is provided;</li> <li>• the SENCO and/or leadership team maintains regular, effective links with partner schools or other service providers, which contribute to the educational programme of the learners; and</li> <li>• the school operates an inclusive extra-curricular programme, and the SENCO and/or leadership team promotes and maintains effective links with the pre-school settings, youth sector, employers and the community organisations, which contribute to the wider education of learners with SEN.</li> </ul>	<p>Sources of Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home-school records</li> <li>• Records of parental involvement in SEN provision [e.g. involvement in Individual learning Plans (IEP)], target setting and in paired reading)</li> <li>• Records of school involvement with other agencies and services in the wider community</li> <li>• Curricular extension into community</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development

## 1. Quality of Leadership and Management

Q. How effective are the leadership and management, and/or the SENCO in raising achievement and supporting learners with SEN?

1.6 Equality of opportunity, diversity and good relations.  How effectively do the SENCO and/or the senior leadership plan strategically and work proactively a) to ensure equality of access, and b) to foster good relations and inclusive practices, to meet the diverse needs of learners and staff?	Evaluate the extent to which the SENCO and/or leadership ensure:	Sources of Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meet statutory requirements in relation to equality, diversity and inclusivity and actively promote these;</li> <li>• continually work to ensure attitudes and behaviours that respect diversity, permeate the ethos of the school, and that anything contrary is addressed;</li> <li>• ensure that the learners have an age-appropriate curriculum and resources, and where possible, their interests, are encouraged and developed;</li> <li>• actively ensure the right of the learners with SEN to succeed, encourage the learners to have their voice, respect their views and celebrate their success; and</li> <li>• ensure that all of the provision, both the formal and informal curriculum, is accessible to all learners and in a manner that takes account of their ages and abilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-school and extra curricular programmes, Citizenship, personal and social development and community relations</li> <li>• Integration opportunities with other schools/ colleges/ agencies/ play groups etc.</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development

1. Quality of Leadership and Management		
Q. How effective are the leadership and management, and/or the SENCO in raising achievement and supporting learners with SEN?		
1.7 Public Value:	Evaluate the extent to which the SENCO leadership:	Sources of Evidence
To what extent is the school able to provide value for money and meet effectively the additional needs of its learners, the expectations of all its stakeholders, and fulfil government's expectations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are able to track any additional SEN monies and demonstrate effective use of finances, to ensure that provision is both high quality and cost effective, and that it avoids unnecessary duplication;</li> <li>• make effective and efficient use of resources and expertise, local, regional and global, to support the provision for children with SEN; and</li> <li>• make use of external support to build the capacity of staff, and thus reduce reliance on external services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialised provision for SEN e.g. Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or challenging behaviour.</li> <li>• Continuing Professional Development programme with specific relevance to SEN/Inclusion</li> <li>• Investment in specialised areas of provision</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development

2. Quality of Provision for Learning		
Q. How effective is the provision for learners with SEN?		
2.1 Planning:  How effective is planning to support and promote successful learning for learners with SEN?	Evaluate the extent to which the SENCO and/or leadership ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school has a clear and coherent policy for SEN, which guides the planning of staff, and reflects the priorities in the SDP for SEN;</li> <li>the teachers throughout the school, plan effectively in the longer and shorter term, a) to identify individual learners achievements, what interests and motivates them, what they find difficult and how they learn best, and b) to set the intended learning outcomes, which the learners are expected to acquire;</li> <li>the SENCO and/or leadership team co-ordinate SEN planning across the school, provide appropriate advice with individual learners' planning, and ensure consistency and coherence in individual learning programmes;</li> <li>the SENCO and/or leadership team plan additional support (e.g. withdrawal) to enhance the work of the teacher;</li> <li>the learners with SEN talk with their teachers about how their learning is planned and how it 'works' for them; and</li> <li>planning is carefully linked to intervention and evaluated to inform improvement and future support or termination of support, as necessary.</li> </ul>	Sources of Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEN/pastoral care policies</li> <li>Subject policies</li> <li>SEN register and guidance</li> <li>Evaluation of common planning format and usage</li> <li>SENCO records of co-ordination of SEN provision in class and on withdrawal sessions</li> <li>Learners knowledge of SEN provision and targets setting</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development

2. Quality of Provision for Learning		
Q. How effective are teaching, learning and assessment?		
2.2 Teaching and Learning:  How effective are the teaching and learning in promoting successful learning?	Evaluate the extent to which:	Sources of Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the teachers create a purposeful and stimulating learning environment, which ensures that learners with SEN engage with learning, are motivated by their programme, and achieve to a high standard appropriate to their age;</li> <li>• from a young age, learners are helped to become increasingly aware of what they can do well, and to use these strengths to help them to tackle new learning or compensate for any gaps or difficulties;</li> <li>• learning is designed to enable learners with SEN to work individually, in pairs, small groups and in whole class lessons, with increasing confidence, maturity and concentration;</li> <li>• the SENCO and/or leadership team provides additional support (in-class or withdrawal), which enriches the quality of classroom practice and consolidates the learners' progress in a coherent way; and</li> <li>• the learners are helped to apply the additional support they receive, and see coherence in their learning programme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils' records of progress</li> <li>• Record of deployment of classroom assistants</li> <li>• Lesson observation records</li> <li>• Opportunity for the pupils to work individually in pairs and in groups</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development

## 2. Quality of Provision for Learning

### Q. How effective are teaching, learning and assessment?

2.3 Assessment:	Indicators	Sources of Evidence
<p>How effective is assessment in promoting learning?</p>	<p>Evaluate the extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the SENCO and/or leadership team work with the teachers in identifying accurately the suitability of the learning provision for learners with SEN;</li> <li>• assessment is well-anchored in astute, systematic observation and monitoring of what the learners can do, and what they find difficult;</li> <li>• at pre-school and foundation stage, good use is made of personalised record books, outlining daily activities and children's experiences at home and in school / pre-school;</li> <li>• IEPs are well-focused on realistic targets, guide work in the classroom, are used regularly, and effectively monitored and up-dated;</li> <li>• the teachers involve the learners with SEN in tracking and recording their own progress, and in reflecting on what they have been able to do, what has been problematic, and how they might do even better;</li> <li>• the assessment evaluates the efficacy of the intervention processes, and the subsequent improvement in the learners' achievements; and</li> <li>• the SENCO and/or leadership team has a clear overview of the value and impact on learning of the various forms of assessment used in the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment policy and evidence of use</li> <li>• Use made of external assessment materials</li> <li>• SENCO records</li> <li>• Evidence from class observation</li> <li>• SEN meetings etc</li> <li>• IEPs</li> <li>• Pupils' self-assessment records</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development



2. Quality of Provision for Learning		
<p><b>Q. How well do the learning experiences, programmes and activities meet the needs of the learners and the wider community?</b></p>		
<p><b>2.4 Curriculum Provision:</b></p> <p>How effectively does the curriculum offer coherent, broadly balanced programmes of learning, which provide learners with SEN clear progression opportunities?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Indicators</b></p> <p>Evaluate the extent to which the SENCO and/or senior leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure that for learners with SEN, their experience of school is socially inclusive, and that they have appropriate opportunities to participate in activities with their peer group;</li> <li>• provide a relevant curriculum which supports the learners to develop and use their language and mathematical skills, to enable them to access the whole of the statutory curriculum and the academic and voluntary options, which meet their needs; and</li> <li>• provide a programme of learning which meets the needs, interests and the prior achievements and experience of the learners with SEN, and ensures that they are motivated and continue to succeed.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sources of Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum documents</li> <li>• SEN documents relating to provision relevant and breadth</li> <li>• Pupils' IEPs and personalised learning programmes</li> <li>• Available accreditation pathways</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development

## 2. Quality of Provision for Learning

Q. How well do the learning experiences, programmes and activities meet the needs of the learners and the wider community?

2.5 Learning Experiences:	Indicators	Sources of Evidence
<p>How well do the learning programmes and activities support and promote the learning of pupils with SEN and those who are gifted and talented?</p>	<p>Evaluate the extent to which the SENCO and/or senior management ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the approaches to learning and the resources used are appropriate, and that with younger children in particular, there is appropriate emphasis on their physical, social and emotional development, along with their cognition and speech and language development;</li> <li>• the teachers give space and attention to listening to the learners' views on their learning opportunities, and programmes and make adjustments as necessary;</li> <li>• the provision of valuable additional support to enable individual learners to maintain their rates of progress, and keep pace with the work of the class as indicated in their IEPs; and</li> <li>• the learning experiences make good use of the learners' interests, and are creative, motivating, and relevant to every day life, and contribute to the learners' having realistically high expectations of what they can achieve.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEN documents</li> <li>• Whole school SEN records</li> <li>• Individual pupils files; records, annual reviews</li> <li>• Transition documents</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development

2. Quality of Provision for Learning		
Q. How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?		
2.6 Pastoral Care:	Indicators	Sources of Evidence
How effectively do the care, advice and guidance and other support processes, provided for the learners, safeguard their welfare, promote their personal development and ensure achievement?	<p>Evaluate the extent to which the SENCO and senior management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure the safety, health and well-being of the learners, and that additional support is provided in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect;</li> <li>ensure that adequate time is afforded to the pastoral needs of learners, and that they are helped to develop the resilience and coping skills needed to deal with the barriers they face;</li> <li>provide or secure additional advice and support to help meet the pastoral needs of learners whose needs are complex or who are marginalised or at risk of suspension and expulsion; and</li> <li>actively seek the learners' opinions on their own progress and on what facilitates or hinders their learning, and adjust their learning plans accordingly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pastoral care/ counselling records</li> <li>SEN records</li> <li>Information provided for parents and carers</li> <li>Records of pupil attendance, participation in extra-curricular programmes</li> <li>Records of achievements</li> <li>Annual reviews</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development

## 2. Quality of Provision for Learning

### Q. How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?

2.7 Safeguarding (protection of children and vulnerable adults):	Indicators	Sources of Evidence
<p>How effective is the school in making arrangements to safeguard and promote the health and well-being of the learners with SEN?</p>	<p>Evaluate the extent to which the SENCO and/or senior leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make arrangements beyond that available generally, to safeguard and promote the health, well-being, welfare and protection of learners with SEN; and</li> <li>• ensure that the designated teachers have received appropriate training in child protection and in understanding the needs of those pupils with conditions, which require sensitivity and alternative support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pastoral care data</li> <li>• Personal and social development programmes</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development

2. Quality of Provision for Learning		
Q. How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?		
2.8 Additional Learning Support:	Indicators	Sources of Evidence
<p>How effective is the school in providing additional learning support for those who have cognitive, physical, emotional or linguistic barriers to learning?</p>	<p>Evaluate the extent to which the SENCO and/or senior leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide specialist and expert areas of support, which meet the needs of learners, who have cognitive, physical, emotional or linguistic barriers to learning e.g. ASD, challenging behaviour, dyslexia;</li> <li>• provide specialist support in addition to that normally available in class, to enable pupils with particular needs to access the curriculum and learning;</li> <li>• ensure that the school is SENDO compliant;</li> <li>• ensure that all staff are appropriately trained to provide the support required of them;</li> <li>• ensure that the annual reviews of learners' progress, and the assessment of specialist support indicate appropriate progress, both on the part of learners, and in the development of the capacity of the staff; and</li> <li>• are able to account for the efficient and effective use of SEN resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional SEN support provision</li> <li>• Multi-agency minutes</li> <li>• Newcomer information</li> <li>• Curriculum documents</li> <li>• Extra curricular and pastoral support</li> <li>• SENDO compliance records</li> <li>• Referral requests</li> <li>• Classroom assistant timetable</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development

## 2. Quality of Provision for Learning

### Q. How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?

2.9 Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)	Indicators	Sources of Evidence
<p>How effective is the programme of CEIAG in meeting the needs, the potential and the interests of learners with SEN?</p>	<p>Evaluate the extent to which the SENCO and/or senior leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide access to CEIAG information beyond that available generally, for some pupils whose needs are complex and more difficult to meet;</li> <li>• ensure that staff are aware of the range of accreditation and post-16 career pathways for learners who have SEN;</li> <li>• provide a well-planned and coherent careers / transition programme, including the opportunity for pupils with SEN to engage in personal career planning;</li> <li>• provide work-related learning opportunities to meet the varied needs of pupils with SEN; and</li> <li>• ensure that IEPs reflect appropriate CEIAG.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Careers information and records</li> <li>• Annual conferences</li> <li>• ICT provision</li> <li>• Pupil records over time</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development

3. Quality of Achievements and Standards		
Q. How far do learners with SEN achieve the highest possible standards of work and learning?		
3.1 Achievements:  How far do learners with SEN achieve the highest possible standards of work and learning?	Evaluate the extent to which learners	Sources of Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regardless of age, are motivated, responsive, and can point to new and recent achievements, as well as new goals towards, which they are aiming;</li> <li>make good progress commensurate with their abilities, their medical conditions and other barriers to learning, (where these exist); work at their highest and best levels, and where possible achieve externally recognised accreditation;</li> <li>demonstrate good levels of communication, language, numeracy, information handling and ICT skills, to enable them to access the curriculum and extend their learning independently and in a group; and</li> <li>build appropriately on their prior attainments and interests, and achieve in line with benchmark data, and the learners' scores on cognitive ability tests, where available.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School records</li> <li>Class/individual pursuit/observation records</li> <li>Information for parents and carers</li> <li>IEPs</li> <li>Behaviour records</li> <li>Expulsion/suspension and attendance records</li> <li>Accreditation routes and achievements</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development

### 3. Quality of Achievements and Standards

Q. How far do learners with SEN achieve the highest possible standards of work and learning?

3.2 Dispositions and capabilities:	Evaluate the extent to which learners	Sources of Evidence
<p>How far do learners acquire and develop the dispositions, skills and capabilities for life-long learning, and independence, and contribute to (or lay the foundations for their eventual contribution to) the community and the economy?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have increasing self-awareness and the ability to review and critique their own progress, and to address areas that need to improve;</li> <li>• demonstrate the ability to acquire skills and concepts systemically and sequentially, and to do so with appropriate and increasing independence;</li> <li>• see connections and coherence in their learning, and can transfer their skills and apply their learning in new situations;</li> <li>• demonstrate the ability to engage in discussion, work on their own or in teams, think flexibly, tackle problems and show perseverance and self-reliance; and</li> <li>• understand how their learning can be applied to help them participate effectively in society, and as contributors to the local and global economy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Records of external involvement in various projects</li> <li>• Records of links between school and parents</li> <li>• Records of individual pupils' achievements and progress</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development



3. Quality of Achievements and Standards		
<p><b>Q. How far do learners with SEN achieve the highest possible standards of work and learning?</b></p>		
<p>3.3 Progression:</p> <p>How far do learners demonstrate progression within the organisation, building on their prior achievements, and preparing appropriately for the next phase of their learning?</p>	<p>Evaluate the extent to which learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate consistent progress commensurate with their abilities and the barriers they face in learning;</li> <li>• demonstrate the ability and resilience to handle change, problems, and disappointments, and the confidence to embrace new learning opportunities;</li> <li>• respond positively to the learning support that complements their main learning programme, and demonstrate progress across the curriculum as a result;</li> <li>• support staff are actively and systematically working towards a reduction in any additional support that is provided; and</li> <li>• demonstrate the ability to plan review and evaluate their work.</li> </ul>	<p>Sources of Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Records of achievement/annual</li> <li>• Reduction in SEN numbers</li> <li>• Increasing expertise across workforce</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development

### 3. Quality of Achievements and Standards

Q. How far do learners with SEN achieve the highest possible standards of work and learning?

3.4 Overcoming barriers:	Evaluate the extent to which learners	Sources of Evidence
<p>How well do individual learners, at all levels of ability, surmount the barriers they may have to learning and achieve their full potential?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop a sense of well-being and personal confidence to enable them to interact effectively with others;</li> <li>• demonstrate effective personal and social skills, and have developed appropriate resilience and independence or support strategies to cope with whatever barriers to learning that they might have;</li> <li>• manage their own difficulties, and demonstrate the insight to know when and how to seek help when required; and</li> <li>• meet their full potential, regardless of gender, social, ethnic, linguistic and educational background.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion data</li> <li>• Pastoral care data</li> <li>• Policies on equality and integration and inclusion</li> <li>• Breakdown of SEN budget and expenditure</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Key Strengths	Areas for Development

Further Information: <http://www.etini.gov.uk>



# Understanding Memory Difficulties



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## Understanding Memory Difficulties

It is important to clarify what is meant by various terms used to describe memory as some misunderstandings arise when we apply our everyday understanding to terms that have more precise meaning when used in psychological research. The most notable term requiring clarification is 'short term memory'. When difficulties in short term memory are referred to in relation to difficulties in dyslexia and literacy development psychologists are referring to difficulties in short term memory within the working memory model and not our everyday understanding of difficulties in remembering in the short term. This should be remembered when reading various documents, articles and publications which refer to short term memory difficulties.

### **What is working memory?**

Working memory refers to the retention of information in short term (temporary) storage while processing incoming information and retrieving information from long term storage. Short term storage within this working memory model refers to holding information in memory for 'seconds' before it fades away or is discarded and the average adult cannot hold more than six or seven units of information in short term memory. According to Gathercole and Alloway (2008) if a child is distracted or interrupted while using working memory the process is lost and the child cannot resume from where they were interrupted. The child must start the task from the beginning again. They also point out that a teacher can expect, in a class of seven year olds, a six year range in working memory capacity. In a class of 30 seven year olds, 3 children will have the working memory capacity of a 4 year old and three children will have the working memory capacity of a 10 year old. These differences have a significant impact on learning and the ability to cope with various strategies currently in vogue to promote learning. According to Gathercole and Alloway (2008) children with high working memory scores typically show excellent reading skills at all ages and also do very well on tests of mathematical ability. Conversely, children with relatively poor working memory scores tend to perform below average levels on these attainment measures.

### **What is meant by short term memory when used by psychologists?**

'Short term memory' simply refers to the storage of information (for a matter of seconds) without having to manipulate it in any way. If we have to manipulate what we are holding in short term memory to complete a task or whilst doing something else at the same time, we are using working memory. This distinction is very important.

### **What is short term memory in relation to our everyday understanding of the term?**

The more common every day understanding of remembering in the short term is therefore quite different from the more precise definition used by psychologists when referring to short term memory within the working memory model. When using our everyday understanding of short term memory we may be referring to something that can't be remembered after half an hour or half a day or two days later. This is a concept that many parents can relate to ... that their child forgets some things easily and may require opportunities for 'over learning' so that something that is remembered in the short term becomes a permanent memory. Some children will need a lot of repetition at regular intervals before something is transferred to the long term memory store. Other children will need much less in terms of repetition and rehearsal. However, more than just repetition and rehearsal is necessary for efficient storage in long term memory and whilst rehearsal aids storage of material (for example, remembering a telephone number) it disrupts working memory.

### **What is long term memory?**

Long term memory refers to the permanent storage of knowledge in memory stores located in various parts of the brain. It should be remembered that retrieval from long term memory is aided by meaning. Unless meaning is attached to new learning retrieval will be difficult if not impossible e.g. children who learn sounds in isolation very often forget them very easily because they have no associated meaning.

Pattern is also very important in reducing the demand of limited capacity within long term memory stores. Pattern is also important for efficient organization in memory, this will be discussed later.

### **What does this mean for learning and teaching?**

Many children with learning difficulties have memory problems that make learning more difficult. It is very important that teachers are able to assess the memory demands in the strategies they are using. In some cases interventions that place demands on various aspects of memory can exacerbate rather than alleviate difficulties. As well as assessing a child's difficulties in learning it is essential that teachers assess the memory demands of the strategies they are using.

It is interesting to note that research conducted by Everett, Weeks, and Brooks (2008) found that compared to controls children with dyslexia, specific language impairment and moderate learning difficulties showed significantly poorer performance on:

- Phonological awareness
- Rapid naming
- Verbal span

The performance of children with Dyspraxia, EBD and ADD was not significantly different to controls suggesting that an alternative causal pathway(s) may be needed to explain their poor literacy scores.

### **What is verbal span?**

Verbal span is one of the measures used when assessing short term and working memory difficulties. For example, asking a child to repeat a simple sequence such as 2, 5, 8 utilises short term memory whereas presenting the child with a simple sequence e.g. 2, 5, 8 and then asking him/her to repeat it backwards

involves working memory. The latter is a working memory task because the child has to hold the digits 2, 5, 8 in short term verbal memory whilst he/she works out how to repeat it backwards.

Gathercole and Alloway (2008:35) point out that working memory ability rather than short term memory is a better predictor of achievement in areas such as reading.

### **Principles of working memory intervention**

Gathercole, S. and Alloway, T (2008: 70-90) suggest the following key principals of working memory intervention. Some examples are provided for clarification where necessary.

#### **Recognise working memory failures**

1. Incomplete recall
2. Failure to follow instructions
3. Place keeping errors
4. Task abandonment

#### **Monitor the child**

1. Look out for the warning signs of working memory overload (see above)
2. Ask the child directly what he/she is doing

#### **Evaluate the work demands of learning activities**

1. Excessive length (under 10s with working memory difficulties struggle to hold in short term storage 3 or more items)



2. Content that is unfamiliar and not meaningful places considerable burden on working memory
3. A demanding mental processing activity (memory load plus processing a task e.g. identifying and blending individual sounds in words where there are more than two phonemes is a demanding mental processing activity for children who have difficulties in working memory)

### **Reduce working memory loads**

1. Reduce the amount of material (e.g. use shorter sentences. Give instructions with accompanying actions to make the content of the instructions easier to remember.)
2. Increase the meaningfulness and familiarity of the material (ensure use of pattern and meaningful associations)
3. Simplify the mental processing (e.g. simplify the grammatical structure of sentences. Ensure children recognise larger units of sound for decoding and encoding, e.g. initial blends and rhymes. Initial blends and rhymes can reduce working memory demands substantially. The working memory demands in one syllable words can be reduced to two units by using 'onset and rime!')
4. Restructure complex tasks (break down tasks into independent steps)

### **Be prepared to repeat**

Employ strategies that tailor repetition to the needs of individual pupils. Not all children require repetition. Encourage children with WM difficulties to request repetition or partner a child with WM difficulties with a child with good memory skills.

### **Encourage the use of memory aids e.g. personal memory cards**

- Writing aids (What is a sentence? poster / spelling aids)
- Mathematical aids (multiplication grids, number lines, fingers, memory cards)
- Audio devices
- Computer software

### **Develop the child's use of strategies for supporting memory**

- Request help (select a person to ask)
- Rehearsal (of small amounts of verbal information)
- Note-taking (check notes regularly as task is being performed)
- Using long term memory (meaningful chunks as opposed to lengthy sequences)
- Place keeping and organisational strategies (diagrams, flow charts to depict task structure)

## **Examples of the impact of working memory difficulties**

### **1. ORGANISATION**

According to Gathercole and Alloway (2008) to be organised we must be able to carry round, in our heads, a list of what we have to do or what we need throughout the day. If these details quickly fade from memory then not being able to remember makes many everyday activities very difficult and stressful.

Many children with working memory difficulties present as being poorly organised.

They suggest that help with personal organisation should be given by providing:

- Daily timetables
- Lists of items needed for various activities or classes
- Diaries
- File dividers
- Schoolbags with sections to aid organisation of books and materials needed
- Consider when secondary pupils will return to lockers and help them organise what they will need and when they will return next.

### **2. ATTENTION**

Gathercole and Alloway (2008) also stress the importance of recognising that children with limited working memory capacity can appear to be inattentive, asking their neighbour what the teacher has just said or interrupting. This may be the result of limited working memory capacity.

They suggest that teachers BE PATIENT:

- Keep instructions simple, avoid complex instructions. Give instructions one at a time.
- Allow extra time for thinking so that the child has time to process what has been said.
- Agree with the child a discrete way of knowing if more time is needed.
- Seat the child in a position that makes communication easier i.e. at the front of the class close to the teacher.
- Repeat key words or phrases.

### 3. WRITING

- The need for copying should be avoided, particularly from the board.
- Allow alternative methods of recording e.g. mind maps, diagrams, Dictaphone.
- Introduce joined handwriting as soon as possible as this reduces place finding and orientation difficulties. (McMurray, Drysdale and Jordan (2009) discuss the impact of motor processing difficulties on learning).

### 4. SPELLING

#### Dictation

Dictation sentences are a good method for practising and testing spellings. Hornsby ('Alpha to Omega') suggest the following approach to help with working memory difficulties.

- Dictate the whole sentence.
- Ask the child to repeat it.
- Dictate it again, saying each word very clearly.
- Child writes the sentence saying it clearly as he or she writes it.
- Child is asked to read aloud exactly what he or she has written.
- Final corrections are suggested if the student has failed to discover them.

### **Patterns and sequences**

English is a deep orthography and once children pass the early stages of learning to spell (i.e. CVC, CCVC, CVCC) sound/ symbol mappings can be multiple in both directions.

The importance of teaching 'onset and rime' is well established. Synthetic phonics is a beginning strategy. Indeed Turner and Bodien (2007) advocate the use of synthetic phonics in reception classes (YR1 NI). However, children need to move on from this approach as Turner and Bodien stress. They draw on evidence from the case study of a 7 year old who failed to progress despite considerable phonics teaching.

'she was not segmenting words into their ONSET AND RIME. Consequently, each word appeared as a new item to her that she laboriously decoded phoneme by phoneme rather than decoding by ANALOGY for lists such as 'cat, fat, mat, sat, and hat' where just the first phoneme needed to be changed.'p41

Teachers will recognise children in their class who read in this laboured and pedantic way and must ensure that they move away from this overdependence on decoding at the phoneme level. If children cannot identify syllables as unified units and split the syllable at the onset and

rime level then they may experience memory and retrieval difficulties which manifest in dysfluent reading and phonetically plausible spelling errors. If these spelling errors are repeated and written several times they may become embedded in memory or continued dependence on encoding by sound may result in long term spelling difficulties. Teachers will also recognise children in their class who are good readers and poor spellers. This group of children do not know whether a spelling looks right. Their difficulties in spelling confound teachers because they fail to understand why children misspell words that they can read. Unfortunately some children experience difficulties in spelling long after reading difficulties are remediated and these spelling difficulties can become lifelong (Trieman 1997, Frith 1980).

## Recommendations

1. Ensure spellings are consistent in the sounds they make and visual spelling pattern. For example consider the three groups of spellings below:-
  1. 'red, bed, fed, led'
  2. 'bread, head, lead'
  3. 'said'

Lists 1, 2 and 3 above should be treated as three separate groups even though they have the same rhyming sound. They should not be taught together. Even though the word 'said' appears frequently in reading books children with literacy difficulties often revert to a phoneme encoding strategy and draw on the individual phonemes that come to memory most easily for them. If children attempt to spell words by phonemes alone then the word 'said' could be spelled 'sed' and many teachers would recognise this as a common misspelling. Correct spelling retrieval is governed by meaning (consider 'their' and 'there') and visual recognition that a spelling looks right. The knowledge of

whether a spelling looks right can only be achieved if the child has representations in memory of the correct pattern to which the word belongs.

Patterns and sequences which are consistent in sound and spelling are essential for the development of long term memory and short term processing within working memory. The mental lexicon (visual memory for whole words and letter patterns) is limited in capacity and children must recognise that if they can spell one word in a pattern they can spell many more words that belong to that pattern. If I can spell 'red' I can spell 'bed' by changing the initial sound (phoneme). Reasoning by analogy reduces the load on working memory.

2. Discourage children from spelling by sound alone once they pass the simple CVC stage. Spelling by sound without regard for orthographic knowledge (i.e. knowledge of whole words and 'onset and rime' patterns) results in phonemic spelling errors such as 'becos' for 'because'. Examples of other phonemic spelling errors are 'helpt' for 'helped', dancd for danced, landid for landed. It is important to draw on spelling rules (morphological knowledge) to overcome this type of spelling error e.g. adding 'ed' to regular verbs to make the past tense.
3. Never group words visually without regard to sound e.g. 'prove, glove, stove' children with dyslexia find these groupings confusing as they are not consistent in the sound they make.
4. Trieman (1997) and Frith (1980) both point out that children with spelling difficulties cannot reliably choose from a range of plausible alternatives and their spelling errors are consistently phonetic. Avoid grouping spellings that have same sound, different spelling e.g. vowel phonemes as in 'though, go, toe, show, note, boat'. These groupings are very confusing for children with poor orthographic processing.
5. Irregular words should be learned using multisensory techniques e.g. Look, say, cover, write, check; tracing on sandpaper and in the air;

spelling words using wooden or magnetic letters; writing in joined handwriting.

6. Irregular high frequency words should be taught in semantic groupings in the early stages of spelling development.

## 5. LEARNING LETTER NAMES AND LETTER SOUNDS

Turner and Bodien (2007) suggest that young children need to learn both their letter names and their letter sounds. Indeed, it is only a very small proportion of children who experience difficulty learning the names of the letters of the alphabet. Teaching letter names is important teaching at a whole class level. Carroll et al (2003) point out that there is an important reciprocal relationship between letter knowledge and phonemic awareness. For the small group of children who do experience difficulty Turner and Bodien (2007) suggest learning the letter names with the aid of wooden letters ('The alphabet arc' is well established as a successful method for doing this). They suggest that letter sounds should be taught when working with flashcards or magnetic letters.

'keeping the use of letter sounds and names apart physically like that helps the children know which response to give to each medium.' P27

## 6. READING COMPREHENSION

The goal of reading is comprehension and this is greatly affected by limitations in working memory capacity.

Gathercole and Alloway (2008: 54) explain the demands of the task required

'by holding the words that have been recognised from print for a sufficient period of time to enable the reader to link the words together to produce a meaningful interpretation of the clause or sentence, or even larger sections of text'

If this process is further compounded by the need to decode then reading comprehension becomes an impossible task. The dyslexic reader has to



interrogate the text many times to extract meaning. Children with dyslexia are recognised to have problems in the 'unitization' of sounds. Unitization (Bresnitz, 2006) is the ability to process increasingly larger units from letters to spelling patterns to whole words and connect them to phonological and semantic codes in memory. If children have to decode unknown words, taking each sound in turn, then the working memory demands of decoding may make the unitization of the sounds impossible. Children with working memory difficulties find blending sounds very difficult. When you add the demands of decoding to the working memory demands of reading each word in a sentence the difficulties in reading comprehension experienced by some children are clear.

**Warning signs (Turner and Bodien, 2007 pg 75)**

- Decoding is so laboured that it consumes WORKING MEMORY capacity. As a result, a pupil can decode a sentence without having processed the meaning of the sentence.
- Punctuation is ignored.
- Inferences are missed.
- The pupil believes that decoding is the end goal of the reading process.
- The pupil does not 'engage' with the text.
- Key sentences and key words are not identified and attended to.

**Suggestions**

- Use cloze passages
- Sentence completion exercises
- Paragraph analysis

Carry out paragraph analysis (sentence order, inferences, the way each sentence builds up detail cumulatively)

- Use key words highlighting the main ideas and how they link and make a diagram.
- Identify key words relating to inferences and link to the main key words.
- Use the diagram as a prompt to guide the child when writing the paragraph in sentences using his or her own words.

## Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to introduce teachers to memory difficulties, in particular working memory difficulties, and how they impact on learning. It is hoped that class teachers will begin to identify memory difficulties and make appropriate modifications to strategies they are using. When planning learning activities for children in their class teachers should ensure that support for children with memory difficulties is included in their differentiated approach.

C=consonant, V=vowel (CVC = consonant, vowel, consonant e.g. map; CCVC = slap; CCCVC=strap)

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## Recommended Reading

Gathercole and Alloway (2008) Working Memory and Learning: A Practical Guide for Teachers, SAGE Publications

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# Reading, Writing & Spelling for Children with Special Educational Needs



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## Introduction

These materials are provided to enable teachers to support and develop literacy skills for children who are experiencing difficulty. Whilst this advice may be beneficial to all children in an inclusive classroom it is important that it is recognized that individual differences in learning are to be expected. Success is greatest when interventions are matched to individual needs. With this in mind it is hoped that teachers will find the guidance in this section helpful.

It is suggested that the paper 'Understanding Memory Difficulties' (McMurray, 2011; see page 95) provides an introduction to understanding how memory difficulties impact on the development of literacy skills and how barriers to learning may be present in the strategies teachers are using.

The titles in this section are listed below and a brief explanation of what is included in each is given.

### Page number

113	Early Reading Behaviours
119	Developing Reading Fluency
132	Handwriting Difficulties
142	Levels of Sound and Orthographic Knowledge
145	Dyslexia Friendly Primary Classrooms
161	Dyslexia Friendly Post Primary Classrooms Including the reluctant writer in the 'dyslexia friendly' classroom
177	Dyslexia: Powerpoint Presentation
191	Transition from Primary to Post-Primary
193	Key Indicators of Literacy Difficulties in the Post Primary School

Kathleen Monahan (BELB) has compiled a paper on 'Consolidating Early Reading Behaviours' to ensure that children develop firm foundations on which to build further literacy learning. Ruth Stevens (SEELB) has produced a document providing advice and guidance on 'Developing Reading Fluency'.

The paper on 'Handwriting Difficulties' (McMurray and Drysdale, 2011) provides guidance on the teaching of letter formation and the optimum time for achieving this. Guidance is also given regarding coordination difficulties across the curriculum.

The table, 'Levels of Sound and Orthographic knowledge' highlights four levels of sound and why they are important. This table also includes some teaching points for children experiencing difficulty.

'Assessing and monitoring independence when writing' includes a proforma that teachers can use to record progress.

BELB Peripatetic Support Service provide a range of resources providing guidance for teachers in developing inclusive, dyslexia friendly classrooms. This advice is included in this section and can also be found on CD at the back of this file.

Roberta Connelly and Judith Gordon (NEELB) have put together two documents to support children in their 'Transition from Primary to Post-Primary' and also a guide for teachers to assist them in recognizing 'Key Indicators of Literacy difficulties in the Post Primary School'



## Consolidating Early Reading Behaviours - 'Roaming in the Known'

1. Child needs to know what he can do.
2. Child needs time and space.
3. Roaming in the Known provides opportunities for the child:
  - (a) to experience success;
  - (b) to be secure with what they know;
  - (c) to be faster / more flexible, reproduce automatically what they know;
  - (d) to have ownership of material;
  - (e) to be in control and experience independence;
  - (f) to have the pressure taken off;
  - (g) to kindle / rekindle motivation and interest;
  - (h) to know that he can 'have a go' and be an active rather than passive learner; and
  - (g) to take risks in a non-threatening environment.

## **What sort of activities would have the most pay-off 'In the Known'?**

### **1 Talking**

Genuine conversation with the child establishes a relationship, gives the teacher opportunities to observe that child's oral language control and provides the teacher with useful information about the child's interests and experiences that will help with appropriate book selection. It provides opportunities for the child to be in control and to experience being valued as a person. This will be an important area to work on, in order to maximise story-writing.

### **2 Making Books**

This is a very useful activity, especially for the very lowest achievers who are on dictated text level. It provides a wealth of opportunities to further explore concepts about print and for the child to contribute actively to his early reading material. Bookmaking provides opportunities to consolidate many early reading behaviours.

### **3 Sharing Books**

Gives opportunities for teacher to model appropriate responding, use of strategies and phrased and fluent reading. It will also help to establish some familiar texts.

### **4 Letter and Other Items Knowledge**

It is important to link the "going over" of what the child knows within the context of continuous text as much as possible. The child needs to be able to work flexibly and securely with what he knows.

When item knowledge of letters and words is tested in isolation, the knowledge is often insecure and cannot be applied easily. Teachers need opportunities to observe the child's responses in a variety of contexts rather than conclude that item knowledge is secure.

## 5 Time

"In the Known" gives opportunities for the teacher to be flexible and to be able to explore the range of the child's knowledge without being under the constraints of formal lessons.

### Getting Started with Low Repertoire Children

Reading and making books provides the opportunity to reinforce and model directional concepts.

Early concepts must be established; observe children as they work to verify what each child has in place.

Where required the teacher can model:

- finger pointing;
- L ⇔ R;
- return sweep;
- turning pages.

### Locating Responses

#### Is one-to-one matching secure?

If there is a problem with locating responses:

- teacher can put out 2, 3 or 4 objects and point to each one in succession, naming it;
- child attempts this; when successful moves on to –
- naming objects in succession without pointing; symbols, shapes and pictures might be used to secure locating responses;

- Finger paint can highlight and help develop concept of word-to-word matching. The child can put a dot of paint under each word as he reads with the teacher.
- moving on to word-to-word finger pointing whilst reading familiar text;
- Counters or stickers – green to start red to finish – can help to establish directionality during Roaming.
- when word-to-word matching is secure, reading without pointing.
- A cut-up story can be used to reinforce return sweep.

### Words and Spaces

Using very familiar books and simple text, write out familiar text using large spaces. Use 2-finger framing to locate single known words.

### Spatial Layout

- 1 With magnetic letters, build known words.
- 2 Split up words exaggerating the space.
- 3 Pull word apart – to single letters, then put together again.
- 4 Use a finger space temporarily between words.
- 5 Use different frames for child to reassemble familiar cut-up story eg

"My name is  
James"

"My name  
is James"

- 6 Use child's name to demonstrate that a word has no spaces.

## Cementing Known Items

### Alphabet Book

Start an alphabet book. Make it personal to the child. Begin with known letters, move to partially known. Try to establish trigger words which provide a clear example of initial letter sound link. Family names can provide an excellent starting point. Each letter should have one trigger word eg A – Ann.

### Letters

Use variety of tactile experiences eg

- sandpaper letters;
- sand tray;
- finger painting;
- magnetic letters.

Get child to talk through letter formation when writing, or tracing it, eg '**e – across, up and around**'.

Verbalising can be a powerful aid to memory.

Use magnetic letters to:

- sort;
- match;
- group;
- find odd man out.

Aim for fast responding;

- Have box of known letters – play snap / pairs.
- Put known letters on a dice. Have child roll and write letters as quickly as possible. Time this activity for extra variety.

### Words

- Jumbling – reassembling known words using magnetic letter.
- Tracing word with finger.
- Magic slate.
- Wet brush on blackboard.

**Building up a bank of familiar books** – reading and rereading many level 1 and 2 or made up books.

## Developing Reading Fluency

Reading should be fluid and efficient if it is to be useful and enjoyable for the pupil. It is an important step to becoming a competent reader because it ultimately enables pupils to 'read to learn'.

### Fluent Readers:

- are more likely to understand what they are reading;
- have positive experiences of reading;
- find reading does not require a high level of effort;
- be more motivated to read.

The National Reading Panel defines reading fluency as the ability to read text quickly, accurately and with proper expression.

(NICHD 2000 pg 35)

Fluency is manifested in accurate, rapid, expressive oral reading and is applied during and makes possible, silent reading comprehension.

It may be measured by noting the number of correctly read words per minute when reading aloud a passage of connected text.

(Reading Problems – Daly, Chafouleas, Skinner)

However a definition of fluency should not focus solely on oral reading but needs to take account of silent reading and comprehension.

**The Literacy Dictionary** – The Vocabulary of Reading and Writing defines fluency as "the freedom from word identification problems that might hinder comprehension".

Comprehension is defined as an active search for meaning in a text, in which children show understanding in a variety of ways. However, comprehension

of text does not automatically follow fluent reading. Pupils who decode effortlessly can give more attention to reading comprehension and as a result we may assume that if pupils can read fluently they should also be able to comprehend what they read. For a great many pupils this assumption is correct. However up to 10% of pupils who are fluent readers struggle to understand what they read. (Meisiger, Bradly et al 1997). It is therefore important to explicitly teach comprehension strategies, so that pupils can engage at the various levels of comprehension – literal, inferential, evaluative, appreciative.

**Good Readers:**

- reflect on what they are reading;
- bring their prior knowledge to the text;
- anticipate next event, word and so on;
- adjust their predictions as they read on;
- react to the text in a range of ways both intellectually and emotionally;
- try to determine meaning of unfamiliar words and concepts;
- think about the author of the text, their style, beliefs, intentions and so on;
- question what they are reading and what they would like to know;
- read different kinds of text differently;
- continue to process the text after reading has stopped!



Analysis of data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress in Reading (Pinnell et al 1995) shows a significant positive relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension proficiency.

Strecker, Roser, Martinex 1998 pg 306 concluded that "Fluency has been shown to have a 'reciprocal relationship' with comprehension ....."

**In summary:**

- Non-fluent readers need to give most of their attention to figuring out words. They therefore give less attention to understanding the text.
- They need to become proficient in decoding individual words in connected text.
- They need to assimilate these into visual memory for quick and easy recognition and recall. A good well structured phonics programme will provide the knowledge and skills necessary.
- They need to increase their reading rate while maintaining accuracy.
- They need to understand the importance of phrasing, intonation and expression.
- They need to be enabled to construct meaning using prior knowledge and new information.

There are many ways to focus on these aspects some of which are detailed overleaf.

## Ideas for Developing Reading Fluency

### Model Fluent Reading

The NI curriculum emphasises the importance of the strategy of modelled reading at all key stages. While we understand modelling to be 'thinking aloud', in the context of fluent reading it requires us to read aloud to our pupils, often and with expression, so that they understand what fluent reading sounds like and can transfer this knowledge to their own reading.

They need to listen to a wide range of genre, with a rich variety of language so that they are captivated by reading.

Pupils should be focused not only on the story but on your technique as a reader.

Ask them to think about:

- "How did I keep you interested in the story?"
- "How did I demonstrate what good readers do?"

### Repeated Reading

- One way to promote fluency is to practice reading and re-reading short passages or poems aloud.

This may be as a whole class, small group or one-to-one.

- Each pupil will have a copy of the text.
- Read the poem aloud to them.
- Talk about how you read, phrasing, pausing, rate of reading, intonation.

- Ask pupils to 'echo read' – where you read a line/phrase and they repeat it back.
- Pupils may then re-read the poem or passage as choral reading.
- This actively engages pupils who have difficulty in a supportive environment and helps them feel part of the class.

### Phrased Reading

Since fluency is seamless, phrased reading poetry is a good place to start.

- Write the poem onto sentence strips.
- Model how to group parts of the text together to enhance meaning and engage the listener.
- Share the grouping of the rest of the text.
- Reinforce in small group guided sessions discussing different ways of grouping ideas and how it may effect meaning.

### Readers' Theatre

Readers' Theatre is the oral performance of a script and an excellent way to provide fluency. It does not require memorisation but rather the ability to convey meaning through expression and intonation.

- Each pupil has a copy of the script.
- You read it aloud and they listen.
- Echo read.
- Choral read.

- Children work in groups to read the parts. They may use a few simple props and costumes if you and they like.
- Encourage good oral reading presentation skills
  - ▶ eye contact
  - ▶ not 'hiding behind' their scripts
  - ▶ looking at audience occasionally
- You may wish to tape or video their reading so that they can listen to themselves and evaluate their reading.

### Partner Reading

An older child, parent, classroom assistant may read along with the child providing one-to-one support.

- Support can be withdrawn slowly as child becomes more competent.
- Session should be short 10-15 mins.

### One minute reading

- Establish a baseline with an independent read.
- Pupil will read a short passage for 1 min.
- Calculate words per minute by:
 

Total words read – number of errors = wpm
- Set a weekly target for improvement eg. 2-5 wpm.

- Move from independent to instruction level text as pupils meet their targets.
- Keeping a group of their scores can be a great motivator for many children.

### Tape Assisted Reading

- Pupils listen to and then read along to taped text following in whatever way is comfortable eg. pointing, sub-vocalising.
- Record their own reading.
- Listen and evaluate their reading.
- Practice until they are satisfied with their reading.

Remember in all of these activities pupils require feedback and guidance if they are to increase their performance. Ongoing assessment and monitoring will help you decide if the intervention is producing measurable increases in performance. As pupils become more fluent readers they are more likely to choose to read in the future and the more frequently they choose to read the greater their fluency is likely to become.

# Talking and Listening

## The Development of Oral Language Skills

The value of talking and listening (oracy) in all classrooms as a means of promoting understanding and evaluating learning is now widely accepted. Oracy is also recognised as developing a range of communication skills which are essential both across the curriculum and in later adult life.

Talk is central to learning. It is used constantly to acquire, explore, develop and express knowledge and understanding. The skills of **active listening**, **negotiation** and **decision-making** are also important aspects of the learning process and are identified as elements of the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities in the NI Curriculum (pgs 3-8 TSPC document). "Pupils ..... should be viewed (instead) as active makers of meaning" (pg 9 TSPC document). Oral competence is determined by the ability to use speech appropriately as well as the ability to listen actively. The former includes being able to adjust ways of speaking clearly and effectively according to audience, context and purpose; the latter involves skills of concentration, assimilation and sensitivity to the speaker's viewpoint. Non-verbal communication such as body language and the use and interpretation of silence are also significant aspects of the interactive nature of oral language.

Vocabulary plays a critical role in understanding what has been read.

The active support of all teachers is required in the development of oral language skills across all key stages and all subject areas. Pupils should demonstrate their growing competence by:

- developing increased clarity and precision in describing experience, expressing opinions and articulating personal feelings;
- formulating and making appropriate responses to increasingly complex instructions and questions;

- developing the capacity to organise information and response;
- showing an increasing ability to function collaboratively  
e.g. involving others in a discussion; listening to and giving weight to the opinions of others; perceiving the relevance of contributions; timing contributions; adjusting and adapting to feedback;
- progressively adjusting language and delivery to suit audience and purpose;
- listening to, understanding and responding to wider forms of address;
- demonstrating an improved ability to evaluate and reflect on their own and others' use of oral language;
- gradually recognising the links between oral and written language.

**Purposeful talking and listening underpins all language development.**

### **Principles Underpinning Talking and Listening**

Schools should develop a whole school oral language policy which is guided by the following principles:

- talking and listening should be promoted for both communication and learning;
- the relationship between talking, listening, reading and writing should be recognised and developed;

- teachers should create a classroom atmosphere where pupils' talk is valued and where enjoyment is seen to be an intrinsic feature of learning;
- pupils should experience a range of roles and contexts for talking and listening;
- oral activities will require detailed planning and careful management by all teachers if they are to be purposeful, challenging and enjoyable;
- pupils should be helped to recognise the importance of working collaboratively;
- oral work should be organised according to the procedures agreed by every teacher;
- teachers should plan strategies and allow time for pupils to reflect on their achievements and performance as talkers and listeners;
- all pupils should be supported in valuing their own dialects and in using them where they are appropriate to context and purpose. They should also be able to use Standard English when it is necessary and helpful to do so in talking as well as writing;
- assessment through talk should inform attainment in all subjects as well as reassuring pupils about the value of talking and listening.



## Assessment of Reading Fluency

Any measurement of fluency needs to include measures of:

- oral reading accuracy;
- oral reading rate;
- quality of oral reading;
- reading comprehension.

If the readers have not developed fluency, either when reading aloud or in silent reading, and most of their attention is focused at individual word level it is more difficult to use prior knowledge, context and syntax to gain meaning from text. It is most important to ensure that texts are at the appropriate independent and interest level.

There is currently limited research available to support and guide the assessment of fluency but there is an agreement among research that it must be assessed within the context of reading comprehension.

***"Fluency without accompanying high levels of reading comprehension is simply not adequate."***

(The Fluency Bridge from Decoding to Reading Comprehension –  
John J Pikulski, David J Chard 2005)

Ruth Stevens  
SEELB  
January 2011

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NI Curriculum  
A PMB Publication 2007, Produced by CCEA
- SEELB Literacy Policy

## Handwriting Difficulties

Every movement that we make, that is repeated over and over again to reproduce the same end result, for example the formation of a letter, is dependent on a correctly learned motor plan or sequence. Writing, in terms of letters written on a page, is dependent on deeply embedded, sub-conscious motor memory, we write with a level of automaticity that does not require conscious thought. According to Cohen, Kiss and Le Voi (1993) automatic processes occur without awareness, are highly efficient, difficult to modify, involuntary and have no capacity limitations. Many teachers will identify with the difficulties in attempting to change incorrectly formed letters. Children can adhere to changes when their primary focus is forming a letter in a particular way but when another task is the primary focus e.g. thinking of ideas and writing independently then the over-learned motor sequence swings into action and handwriting reverts to what has been erroneously learned and firmly established. It is clear then that because over learned complex tasks can be performed without engaging conscious processing once they are established they are extremely difficult to modify.

Consider driving a car. Think about each movement required from entering the car to driving off and convey the sequence verbally to another person. You may find that in order to get the sequence right you will have to retrace the movements by actually doing each movement in turn. This is because, for experienced drivers, conscious thought is not required to enact the motor plan, it has been well learned and is now firmly set in motor memory and therefore can be executed with ease.

Consider also writing your name. Write it on a page and then write your name again underneath with your eyes closed. Your eyes closed should not inhibit your ability to write your name because you are not engaging visual memory, and, you do not need to verbalise in any way to remember what to write. You can write your name equally effortlessly because you have in place a well established motor plan which you can execute with ease.

It is essential that early years teachers are aware of the importance of appropriate early intervention ensuring correct letter formation once a child is

'ready' to write and that if 'readiness' is elusive then there may be underlying difficulties requiring closer examination. The importance of effective early intervention is critical.

As over learned incorrect motor plans are extremely difficult to modify it is essential that 'specific guidance on correct letter formation' (CCEA, 2008 p12) is before repeated attempts at writing letters in a particular way during emergent writing activities. The activities in Table 1 below are suggested in advance of children engaging in emergent writing activities.

**Table 1: McMurray, Drysdale and Jordan (2009: 125)**

**Multisensory approach for teaching handwriting: activity ideas**

ACTIVITY
Using large chinks to draw letters on rough ground outdoors
Painting letters on large pages taped to floor or wall
Drawing large letters on blackboard or whiteboard
Tracing letters in trays filled with sand, dried lentils, rice or shaving foam
Tracing letters (using index finger) on the back of another child, and he/she guesses the letter
Forming letters using string, laces or play-doh
Placing a page on a rough surface (e.g. concrete) and drawing letters
Tracing letters on sandpaper
Tracing large letters in the air, either using index finger or ribbons

Very large motor movements are important as a first step in the learning process because the smaller movements (e.g. when writing on the page) are insufficiently large to rouse the brains awareness of the motor sequence involved. It is important to ensure that the correct motor plans are established by giving sufficient guidance on starting point and direction. Children should

not be left on their own to form letters incorrectly therefore teacher guidance, observation, assessment and intervention are essential in these activities.

The following section considers handwriting difficulties in relation to dyspraxia; however, teachers may find these activities useful when teaching letter formation to children in their class. This section also explains why children with dyspraxia experience specific difficulties with handwriting.

### **Handwriting difficulties**

*"Handwriting is a fundamental motor skill for children to acquire and...the motor skills which underpin writing follow a regular sequence of development which emerges as the child matures neurologically".* (Ripley et al. 2000 p34) Therefore handwriting involves many complex processes. Children with dyspraxia experiences perceptual difficulties and motor dysfunction therefore their ability to write legibly, fluently and with speed is affected.

Firstly, it is important to determine whether the child is right or left handed, many children with dyspraxia demonstrate trouble or delay in determining hand dominance. If a child uses one more often than the other this is likely the preferred hand and the child should be encouraged to use it; however they should never be forced to choose. (Dixon and Addy, 2004)

In the first instance the sequence of motor movements will have to be patterned by working with the child on a one to one basis until sufficient knowledge of the sequence is in place enabling the child to benefit from the teacher modelling the task. For example, when attempting to learn the correct formation of a letter the child with dyspraxia will gain no benefit from the teacher demonstrating the formation of the letter to the class by giving verbal instructions outlining the sequence in forming the letter or modelling how to do it (this will assist a child with coordination difficulties but not the child with dyspraxia). It will be necessary to assist the child in forming the sequence of movements in very large motor movements in the air in the first instance. This is because the smaller movements when writing on the page are insufficiently large to rouse the brains awareness of the motor sequence involved. Once the child can trace the motor

sequence in the air then he/she can attempt the sequence on sand paper, again in enlarged movements, or by tracing large movements in the sand tray, then finally the page and at this point may benefit from the teacher supporting the wrist and guiding the movements. Then the other senses may be introduced to further support learning e.g. describing verbally the sequence involved and modelling visually what is required. Lockhart and Law (1994) advocate the use of this multi-sensory approach when teaching handwriting. Their review of literature supported the effectiveness of multi-sensory programmes, as the increased visual, tactile and kinaesthetic input increases the feedback to the cerebral cortex, thus developing the motor plans required for letter formation.

Children with dyspraxia will also benefit from repetition and additional practice when learning handwriting. These children require 'overlearning' (Lockhart and Law, 1994). Through repetition, the new motor plans are developed, stored and gradually become more automatic. Bundy et al (2002) state 'A learned motor skill must be practised to be stored and retrieved in a way that supports expertise. Practising movements is essential to skill development'. A child with dyspraxia has great difficulty in generalising skills, and so specific skills need to be taught and rehearsed before moving on to the next set of skills.

Demonstrating the task at this point allows the child to see what should be achieved, providing them with a goal to work towards and considerable practice will be required to ensure established learning. It is important also to note that children also experience problems in co-ordinating both their hands and often forget to hold the paper whenever they are writing, to overcome this the paper should be secured to the table. Interventions can be employed to help overcome these problems with handwriting. The pencil grip is often awkward, restricting movement and affecting writing, therefore it is important to ensure correct pencil grip in the first instance or in the case of older children to correct poor pencil grip. Providing the young child with a triangular shaped pencil will help to develop pencil grip. Grips for pencils are also available which attach to the pencil allowing the child to slot their pointer finger and thumb into holes. This creates the perfect tripod grip, improving stability and in turn legibility of writing.

Older children who have not had adequate early intervention will continue to experience problems with letter orientation and formation continuing to form many letters incorrectly even in Key Stage 2. Many letters may be written in reverse, making work hard to read and having an effect on the ability to join letters properly. Addy (2006 p 39) implies that the best way to overcome this problem is through the early introduction of joined (cursive) writing. Indeed, Montgomery (2007) also advances the case for teaching cursive writing from the beginning, *'Children with coordination difficulties must learn to use a continuous writing movement. Dysgraphics such as these have difficulties, once they find where to make contact with the paper, in making the required shape and to the precise size and length. As soon as they lift the pen from the paper again in print script to make the next letter the directional, orientational and locational problems begin all over again.'* (Pg 54)

Furthermore, due to spatial and organisation problems, or due to difficulties in crossing the midline, children with dyspraxia will be likely to begin a sentence in the middle of the page and continue writing without any structure, demonstrating problems with the alignment and spacing of words and letters. Spaces between words will be omitted or placed erratically throughout writing.

Table 2 below highlights difficulties in motor processing, not only in handwriting, but across the curriculum.



**Table 2: McMurray, Drysdale and Jordan (2009: 124)**

**Dyspraxia and Related Difficulties in the Classroom**

**Guidance for Teachers**

Difficulty	Possible underlying reason(s)	Intervention strategy
<b>LITERACY</b>		
Starts writing in middle of page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor organisational skills</li> <li>Difficulty crossing midline</li> </ul>	Place green dot on left side of page and red dot on right side of page.
Loses place on page when reading (as child progresses reading seems to deteriorate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual perceptual difficulties/ distracted by too much information on page due to increased amount and reduced size of text</li> </ul>	Limit amount of information on page Increase size of text if necessary Provision of a window frame Use pastel coloured paper when possible to reduce glare of black print on white paper
Poor or inconsistent spacing of words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor organisational skills</li> <li>Visuo-motor/perceptual difficulties</li> </ul>	Encourage child to place a finger space between each word
Lacks automaticity in letter formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motor planning difficulties</li> <li>Visuo-motor/perceptual difficulties</li> </ul>	Implementation of multi-sensory programme (e.g. tracing letters in sand, in the air etc.)
Letter and number reversals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motor planning difficulties</li> <li>Visuo-motor/perceptual difficulties</li> </ul>	Implementation of multi-sensory programme (e.g. tracing letters in sand, in the air etc.)
Not stabilising page with non-dominant hand when writing	Bilateral coordination difficulties	Tape page to desk or place a non-slip mat under the page

Difficulty	Possible underlying reason(s)	Intervention strategy
Non-functional grasp on pencil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proprioceptive/tactile processing difficulties</li> <li>• Limited hand strength</li> </ul>	Provision of triangular pencil or specialised rubber grips
Slow speed of writing	Lack of automaticity	Allow additional time to complete work or reduce amount of work
<b>ORGANISATION AND BEHAVIOUR</b>		
Appears to ignore instructions	Unable to process verbal information, particularly when involved in another task	Provision of visual cues/ instructions
Not following instructions fully or correctly	Unable to recall and plan a sequence of instructions	Break instructions into small steps Provision of visual cues
Difficulty following classroom routine/ disorganised	Poor motor planning and organisational skills	Provision of a visual schedule
Difficulty following timetable/not bringing correct subject books to classes	Poor motor planning and organisational skills	Provision of colour coded timetable and corresponding colour coded books for each subject
Difficulty lining up, may unintentionally bump into other children	Spatial difficulties	Position child at front or back of line
Distractibility and poor concentration	Unable to process simultaneous sensory input	Allow child to work in quieter area of classroom and also limit amount of visual input on and around the child's desk or seat child at a table at front of classroom closer to teacher for instructions
Fidgeting and restlessness	Child is uncomfortable	Ensure child is sitting with correct posture, chair and table correctly positioned with feet on the ground

<b>ART</b>		
Difficulty with some art activities e.g. still life drawing and self portraits difficult	Difficulty in seeing in three dimensions (Addy 2003)	Put supportive measures in place for these types of art activities
<b>NUMERACY</b>		
Specific difficulties with processing mathematics (Dixon and Addy, 2004 , p82) Erratic placement of digits Reversing digits Inability to estimate or judge spatial dimensions Problems understanding and translating 3 dimensional and 2 dimensional figures Confusion about layout of calculations	Spatial dyscalculia due to problems in visuo-spatial assessment and organisation	Introduce mathematical symbols and formation of digits numbers in groups, such as 1, 2 and 3 initially ensuring that 3 and 5 and 6 and 9 are not in the same groups. When the competent the next group can be introduced (See Dixon and Addy, 2004)
Recounting and sequencing	Spatial organisation difficulties (Addy, 2003, p43)	Use number line to reduce dependence on fingers or counters for counting forwards and backwards. Rhymes, jigsaws and recipes can be used to develop sequencing skills. Addy (2003, p43)
Page of calculations appears cluttered		Provision of a 'card window' that covers most of the page revealing only one sum ( Addy, 2006)
Disorganised layout of mathematical work on page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor organisational skills</li> <li>• Visuo-motor/perceptual difficulties</li> </ul>	Provision of squared paper

<b>P.E.</b>		
Difficulty crossing the midline	Poor hand- eye, eye- foot coordination	Activities developing hand- eye, eye- foot coordination
Slow to respond to instructions in P.E appearing defiant or uncooperative	Takes longer to process verbal information and complete actions	Pre-warn child of changes through a discrete measure decided between child and teacher
Avoidance of or disruption in P.E	Motor planning, coordination difficulties and visual figure-ground discrimination. Overwhelmed by vast amount of space available in P.E hall	Provision of clear instructions and demonstrations Implementation of activities which require less coordination and planning Ensure area is restricted and that every child has their own space (Addy 2003)
Avoidance of team sports	Motor planning and coordination difficulties, inability to perceive where other team members are and how they are moving	Provision of more individual sports e.g. swimming, athletics Smaller teams e.g. 5 aside football
Solitary play in the playground	Motor planning difficulties: difficulty in team games	Implementation of structured play activities for children in the playground

All children need to be taught to form letters the correct way and this must be done before they engage in activities where they attempt to form letters. For some children several attempts to form letters may be sufficient for motor plans to be committed to motor memory whilst others will require more over learning. Remember, once incorrect motor plans are in place they are difficult, if not impossible, to modify so endeavour to get it right from the start.

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## PHONICS

### Levels of Sound and Orthographic Knowledge ©McMurray S. (2011)

Sounds: ie What we hear Phonemes	Visual: i.e. What we see	Forms of knowledge	Level of sound	Essential for:	Teaching points
	Represented by one letter (grapheme) e.g. 'b' and 'a' or in the case of digraphs 2 letters e.g. 'sh' and 'oa'	<b>Alphabetic</b>	<b>Level 1</b> This level consists of fine grain sounds	Decoding and encoding in the beginning stages of reading and spelling and decoding and partial encoding at the stage of multiple mappings.	Learning individual phonemes is important, however, some children with literacy difficulties find learning all individual phonemes, in advance of reading text and in the absence of some basic sight words, extremely difficult due to the de-contextualised nature of the activity. Long term memory depends on meaning for efficient retrieval. Also children with limited working memory capacity find it difficult to blend more than two sounds. By the time they get to the last sound in sequences of 3 or more the memory trace for the first sound(s) has faded away making blending an impossible task. Teachers will recognise children who have this difficulty. These children know the individual sounds but just can't blend them together to make words. Chunking is therefore essential for this group.
Onsets	Onsets include individual phonemes (e.g. p, t, b), blends (e.g. cr, bl) and initial consonant clusters (e.g. str, spl)	<b>Onsets consist of alphabetic knowledge (phonemes) and orthographic knowledge (blends and clusters)</b>  Onsets are also referred to as intra-syllabic units. Onsets are the first part of the syllable up to the vowel sound. St/amp St = onset	Onsets include fine and coarse grain sounds  <b>Level 1 = Fine grain (individual phonemes)</b>  <b>Level 2 = coarse grain (consonant blends and clusters)</b>	Exchange of sounds (phonemes)  More efficient storage in long term memory and to reduce the demands in working memory (consonant blends and clusters)	Once children know their initial consonant sounds at level 1 (and not necessarily all sounds as this can place an inordinate burden on memory for some children) they should move quickly to identifying initial consonant blends to reduce the laborious task of taking each sound in turn. These initial blends and letter clusters should be recognised as unified units or chunks.
Rhymes ('rimes')	Final letter clusters in one syllable words which include the vowel immediately preceding the final consonant(s) e.g. 'an', 'imp, ight	<b>Orthographic</b> Intra-syllabic unit (syllables are broken into two with the division coming after the initial consonant(s) and before the vowel sound e.g. stamp amp= rhyme	<b>Level 2</b> Coarse grain  (Level 1: There are a few fine grain rimes e.g. 'ay' as in play)	Essential to reduce storage demands in long term memory and to reduce the demands in working memory. Rimes are also essential for stabilising vowel digraphs, which have multiple mappings, but become stable within particular rimes (Adams, 1990:320) which in turn allows efficient storage in memory Adams, 1990:321).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. These final letter clusters must be recognised as unified units or chunks. Primary age children with working memory difficulties find it difficult to retain and blend more than two sounds in memory.</li> <li>2. Patterns and sequences which are consistent in sound and visual spelling pattern e.g. man, can, ran, fan etc, should be taught to facilitate the development of the mental lexicon (visual memory store for whole words and letter patterns).</li> <li>3. Patterns and sequences should increase incrementally so that the demands on memory build up gradually.</li> <li>4. It should also be remembered that word meanings and usage facilitate recall. Ensure that word meanings and usage are taught. This can be done effectively when teaching spelling.</li> <li>5. When changing the sound at the beginning of a pattern to make a new word, do not create an artificial break in the word. Encourage children to hear the sound at the beginning that they want to change, then change the beginning sound saying the new word as a whole.</li> </ol>

Syllables	Unified unit (cluster of letters) without a break in the sound	Orthographic 'Interesting' has 4 syllables In/ ter/est/ing	Level 3 Coarse grain	It is essential that children can recognise syllables for more efficient decoding and encoding of multisyllable words.	It is important that children can hear the syllable division and clap out the syllables in a word. When identifying syllables in written words compound words are a good starting point as compound words can be broken into two smaller words e.g. bedroom. Examples of some rules for syllable division are 1) In a two syllable word where there are two consonants the same in the middle of the word and there is a vowel either side, then the word is divided between the two consonants e.g. rabbit = rab/bit. 2) When two consonants that are different are between two vowels then divide the word between the two consonants e.g. -chapter chap/ter There are some very good publications that cover all the rules of syllable division and provide practice activities.
Whole word	House, yacht, the, begin, complicated etc	Orthographic	Level 4 Coarse grain	Whole word or automatic sight word recognition is essential for reading fluency.	It is essential that children have some basic sight words to which they can anchor learning that is de-contextualised. This aids memory retrieval for individual sounds which themselves carry no meaning. Children can remember these sounds because they associate them with particular words. If decoding is required to recognise a word then it cannot be considered as level four i.e. automatic whole word recall.

It should be noted here that using the term 'level' in this table does not refer to a sequence in development but rather to the size of the unit of sound.

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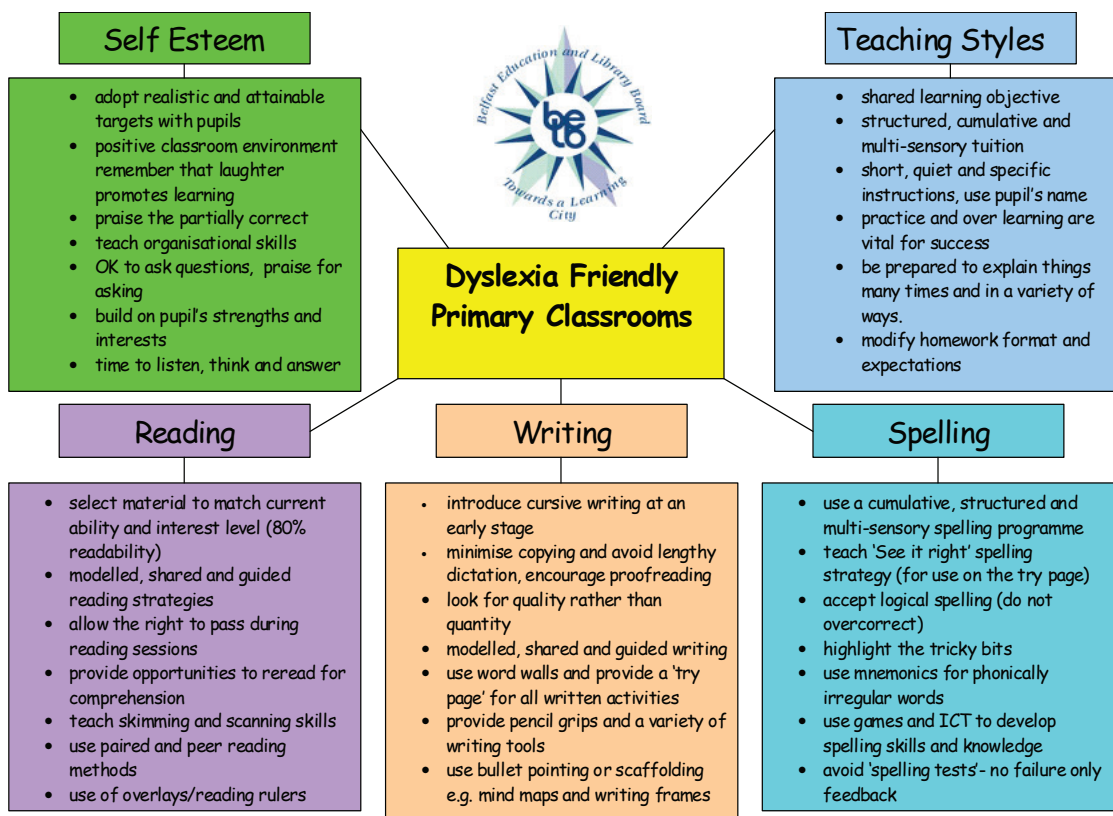




## BELB Peripatetic SpLD Support Service

Strategies, modifications and adjustments to support the development of a dyslexia friendly classroom.

## Dyslexia Friendly Primary Classrooms



## BELB Peripatetic Support Service

These suggestions do not represent a definitive list and should be added to as you develop additional strategies and adjustments to meet the needs of pupils with dyslexia in your classroom. January 2011

# Dyslexia Friendly Primary Classrooms

## Self-esteem

- adopt realistic and attainable targets with pupils
- positive classroom environment remember that laughter promotes learning
- praise the partially correct
- teach organisational skills
- OK to ask questions, praise for asking
- build on pupil's strengths and interests
- time to listen, think and answer

### Positive classrooms use:

- **The language of success:** signal confidence to the children in their ability to succeed 'I know you can'
- **The language of hope:** create an ethos where it is acceptable for children to say 'I'll try but I might need help'...support this with phrases 'You can do it' and 'What helped you do it'
- **The language of possibility:** children can be negative and limit their efforts- 'I am no good at this' support the child with 'Yes you did get a bit mixed up, lets see what caused this' or 'maybe I haven't explained this well enough'

### Children acquire self esteem through

- **Experiencing:** pride in their work, success in mastering a skill, opportunities to pursue their interests.
- **Receiving:** positive feedback from significant others, sincere praise, unconditional love, support and acceptance.
- **Feeling:** capable, liked, valued, aware that they have specific strengths, optimistic about the futures and positive about themselves

So.....Watch out! for the CYCLE OF FAILURE

### The cycle of failure

Failure originally indicated by the judgement from a significant other

Comparing own work and ability with others



Failure at event



Feel bad

Self confidence diminishes

Attempt less



Achieve less

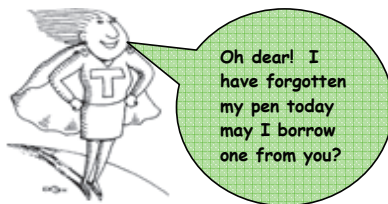
Self worth diminishes

Self limiting beliefs affecting behaviour

Making meanings from comparisons

Provide a positive comment to every child in your class every day. Greet them in the morning and say good bye to them every afternoon.

Demonstrate in your role play how you want something to happen.



Model positive behaviour by giving everyone who visits your classroom a warm and friendly welcome.

### How to build self esteem:

- Help them to identify and recognise their strengths.
- Help them to cultivate interests.
- Encourage and support extra curricular activities.
- Give them appropriate responsibilities in class.
- Help them to set realistic goals.
- Avoid using sarcasm, comparisons, criticism of their character or intelligence. If they misbehave tell them it is the behaviour you don't like not them.
- Provide the help they need to acquire skills.
- Display their work.
- Encourage them to talk and then listen to them.
- Teach them strategies to deal with negative emotions e.g. self talk, 'I know I can do this', visualizing something positive.
- Be open and honest. 'In spite of the obstacles and extra hard work, you can be successful'.

**Positive marking**

- Agree with pupils what you are marking for.
- Enable pupils to edit /evaluate their own work, by referring back to marking criteria.
- Mark for improvement, so that a pupil can learn from failure and raise self esteem: be specific, relate the feedback to the learning target, and ask questions of the learner.
- Give specific guidelines or tips for improvement
- Sandwich constructive criticism between two pieces of praise
- Comment on the work and not the person
- Mark for effort as well as achievement

**Try**

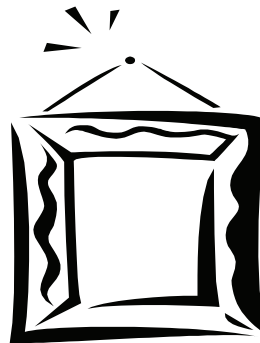
- Two stars and a wish or Success, Tip and Think
- Marking in different colours: green spelling, blue content
- Giving ticks for positive work
- Giving tips in speech bubbles
- Marking spellings by ticking the correct letters and offering the alternative. Corrections written by the side ...not for every spelling incorrect, but possibly for what you have taught.
- Marking for one thing only and telling them what the marking is for i.e. Spelling only or content.

Teachers says	I say
I like	
I like	
I wish	



**Celebrate success by:**

- Displaying work
- Showing it to other teachers
- Putting it into a class book
- Displaying work on a success board
- Notes home
- Homework exemption certificates
- Golden Time (pupil's choice)
- Selection of rewards (avoid sweets!)



Present 'successful' work daily in a picture frame in the classroom i.e. whole books pinned up, pages of work, paintings etc.

**Improved organisational skills will support self esteem**

Provide personal checklists of equipment. Label all possessions.

Monitor the correct use of the homework diary and engage parents support for maximum effect.

Does the school produce its own school diary?

- All Staff names
- School Rules
- School lay out
- School phone numbers etc....

Does the school make full use of its website?

Display class rules, and refer to during class

Home check charts on individual desks e.g. Have I packed my.....



**Use a digital camera in your classroom to**

- Make a display of sequenced activities
- Make illustrated labels for your resources.
- Make and display illustrate instructions.
- Make and display visual timetables, rules etc.
- Make a class timeline of activities over the school year.
- To record work that is no longer on display.

Don't forget in the classroom give me five!

1. Eyes looking at the teacher
2. Ears listening
3. Lips quiet
4. Hands still
5. Mind wide awake

**Computers**



**Assembly**



Don't fuss about forgotten equipment, keep spares handy.

# Dyslexia Friendly Primary Classrooms

## Teaching Styles

- shared learning objective
- structured, cumulative and multi-sensory tuition
- short, quiet and specific instructions, use pupil's name
- practice and over learning are vital for success
- be prepared to explain things many times and in a variety of ways.
- modify homework format and expectations

**Visual aids** can also mean supplementing information with a strong visual impact. This could be natural gesture, facial expression, use of pictures, video, DVD's, quick drawings on a flip chart, use of an interactive whiteboard, links with the internet, use of real objects, using your own mind map, flow chart and time lines on the board.

**Differentiation :**  
**Input:** 'Must, Should, Could', Task ladder of difficulty, Choice of tasks  
**Support:** How much to give? And who can give it? Learning preferences  
**Outcome:** How to present it. Marking, What to mark for. Amount to be presented

**Have clear learning outcomes**

Today we are learning to.....

I am learning to .....


.....

.....

.....

WALT

We are learning to...




WILF

What I'm looking for.....

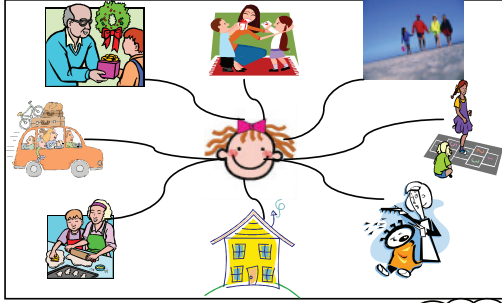
**Connect the learning**

What did we learn yesterday about .....


Last week we learned to.....

.....


Trying to learn anything without first getting the big picture is like trying to do a jigsaw puzzle without the picture on the box.



**Use a study buddy**




**Think pair and share!**



**Break tasks down into small meaningful steps**

Extended use of concrete materials may be required in subjects such as maths, let them count on their fingers.





**Provide brain breaks/brain gym. Provide water if necessary.**



**Teach, practise and use by pass strategies:** laptops, dictaphones, audio books, spellcheckers, abridged versions of novels, screen reader.

**Check out your class seating:** Can the child see you and the board/visual prompts? Seat the child where you can give them help and make eye contact easily. Group according to task, not necessarily literacy levels.

## Sensory Preferences

Visual	Auditory	Tactile	Kinaesthetic
			
Reading Text	Hearing monologue	Touching	Physical motion and external movement
Seeing diagrams, pictures and images	Listening to and taking part in discussions	Handling	Internal motion i.e. e-motion feeling good about a teacher or subject
Internal vision i.e. imagination	Self talk and internal dialogue	Manipulation	

### Lets Talk!

Let the children verbalise what they have to do. Promote verbalisation during an activity, allow collaborative talk.

Encourage children to ask questions

- Give them time to think
- Get them to write questions they think of on a 'post its', to ask at the end.
- React positively to both questions and answers

#### Visual learners like:

Computers, TV  
 Board games  
 Picture books, magazines  
 Visual cues in reading  
 Coloured pens/drawing  
 Word shapes  
 Visual phonic letter strings  
 Flash cards  
 Tracing



#### Auditory learners like:

Verbal instructions  
 Discussion, peer and group  
 Book tapes, songs rhyme  
 Listening to story read by teacher  
 Plays  
 Computer  
 Phonics



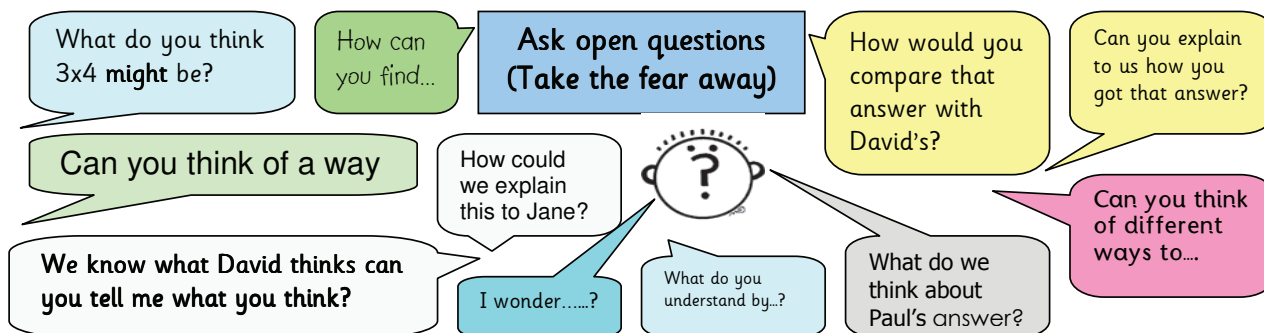
#### Kinaesthetic learners like:

Practical activities  
 Physical action  
 Hands on activities  
 Act out stories, Drama  
 Cut and stick  
 Magnetic letters  
 Whiteboard  
 Computer



#### Give clear instructions:

1. If you have a lot of information or instructions to give, break it down into 'shorter chunks', pausing after each as a long block can be difficult to process.
2. Say things in the order you want them done.
3. Cut down on the amount you say, studies show that adults talk 90% of the time in class. For a young person with dyslexia this can be overwhelming.
4. Slowing down your talking will mean students will give longer responses, and will get a chance to say more.
5. Avoid the use of complex sentences, 'put the one you thought it was next to the one that's bigger'
6. Encourage dialogue: Comment on what they are doing, pause and rather than asking questions encourage dialogue 'I see you have chosen that book to read, do you know the author?'
7. Pause after you ask a question- rather than having an empty space turn and write something on the board or I'll be back to you in a moment for the answer.



# Dyslexia Friendly Primary Classrooms

## Reading

- select material to match current ability and interest level (80% readability)
- modelled, shared and guided reading strategies
- allow the right to pass during reading sessions
- provide opportunities to reread for comprehension
- teach skimming and scanning skills
- use paired and peer reading methods
- use of overlays/reading rulers

**Allow extra time** as many pupils with dyslexia are trying so hard to decode the writing they are unable to comprehend what they have read. Either read to them or let them listen to talking/ audio books. Do not assume or presume that pupils **'know'** what style of reading is required for different tasks:

- exam questions
- reading to glean facts
- for specific information
- general overview
- pleasure

**Ensure that a child is comfortable reading aloud in class, if possible provide opportunities for them to rehearse / prepare beforehand or give them the right to pass.**

Reading is a complex process that demands competence in many different skills. It involves moving from concepts of print to the basic mechanical skills needed to read letters and words to skills that involve understanding the meaning of words, sentences, paragraphs and chapters. Children move at different rates in developing these skills and they vary in their ability to grasp each step. Effective teaching, on going support, encouragement and persistence help this process. There is no perfect system or one right way to teach reading to struggling readers but good instruction must focus on all areas of reading in order to be effective:

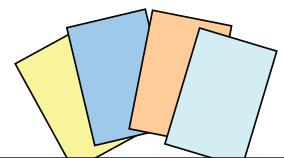
- Phonological awareness
- Explicit systematic phonics
- Decoding strategies
- Word recognition (analogy, context, high frequency words)
- Syllabification / chunking
- Reading fluency
- Vocabulary knowledge
- Comprehension

For further information on individual support read 'The Dyslexia Checklist: a Practical Reference for Parents and Teachers Sandra F Rief, Judith M Stern. ISBN 978-0-470-42981-5

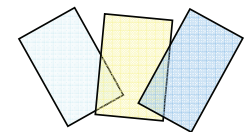
## To minimise visual difficulties

**Provide photocopies of your notes and make work sheets easy to read by**

- Making them clear, simple and uncluttered.
- Avoiding underlining as this may cause the writing to blur, use **bold** or **colour** or **both**.
- Highlighting **key words** in **bold** or **colour**
- Using a minimum size 12 point or 14 point font size with 1.5 spacing.
- Using key pictures to provide a **break** for the eyes.
- Inserting pictures or symbols to assist the learner make links and connections with the text and their own experiences.
- Putting key words into summary boxes, to let the reader get an idea at a glance.
- Avoiding too many changes in font. Choose dyslexia friendly fonts and avoid Times New Roman i.e. **Arial Comic Sans Trebuchet Verdana Tahoma SassoonCRInfant**
- If possible using colour, matt or paper that is not too thin..
- Keeping text uneven and not justified, as it makes tracking from one line to the next easier.



Make use of coloured paper and coloured backgrounds on white board presentations.



Offer a selection of transparent overlays

Seat out of direct sunlight and away from fluorescent lighting or adjust the lighting in the classroom..

Provide good instruction for parents on how to support their child's reading. (See the support for parents section)  
 Lots of support for parents is available on the internet see the list of referenced web sites.

Display reading support strategies in the classroom, in homework diaries and reading record booklets.





### How do we read a word that we're unsure about.....?

First consider:

- Is this a new book you are reading?
- On the front cover is there a title or any pictures?
- On the opening pages look for clues.



Then, look more closely at the word and . . . you could try and

- Look at a picture to help support your choice 
- Say the first sound 
- Sound across the word 
- Chunk the syllables yes / ter / day
- Read on..... 'I took my sick dog to the vet yesterday'
- Think, does this make sense..... 
- Go back, check it and fix it!

If asking children to copy or read from a board consider using different coloured writing for each line or coloured stars at the beginning and end of a sentence. It helps to stop them losing their place and for some pupils may make tracking easier.

The ship sailed across the sea.  
 It landed at an island  
 The sailors got out to visit.

- \* The ship sailed across the sea. \*
- \* It landed at an island. \*
- \* The sailors got out to visit. \*

### FIVE FINGER TEST

Choose a book to read. Open it in the middle. Read down a page and raise one finger for each word on the page that you cannot read.

**No fingers or one finger:**

This book is easy for you to read. Have fun!

**Two Fingers:**

This book is just right for you  
 Enjoy your reading!

**Three fingers:**

This book is challenging but you may still enjoy it. Try it!

**Four fingers:**

This book will be very challenging. Read with a partner and /or a dictionary handy

**Five fingers:**

This book is probably too hard to be fun. Save it for later or read it with an adult who can help you.



### To support reading and understanding

#### In your classroom try to:

Label all equipment cupboards with pictures as well as words.

Try **not** to move things around

Provide **illustrations** to help remember scientific vocabulary and terminology.

Always **show and name** equipment when giving instructions or explaining new concepts.

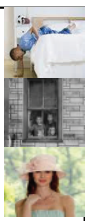
Create help mats and keep them on a memory stick for display on any classroom's interactive white board. To support the reading of difficult words for different writing activities.

To support reading and understanding introduce and rehearse subject specific vocabulary and where possible provide graphic cues. Provide posters on the classroom walls as constant reminders of vocabulary, mathematical signs and formulae, key word lists, word lists for writing and thesaurus.

**Where** are my shoes?

The children **were** looking out of the window.

I want to **wear** my big hat to the party.



$-$	$+$	$\times$	$\div$	$=$
minus/negative	plus/positive	multiplied by	divided by	equals
$\neq$	$\approx$	$\equiv$	$\neq$	
is not equal to	is approximately equal to	is equivalent to	is identical with	is not identical with
$\pm$	$\leq$	$>$	$\geq$	$<$
plus or minus	is less than or equal to	is greater than	is greater than or equal to	is less than

Read questions aloud in chunks to help with meaning and short term memory.

Spring Summer Autumn Winter

### Time Help Mat

1	one	7	seven
2	two	8	eight
3	three	9	nine
4	four	10	ten
5	five	11	eleven
6	six	12	twelve

Months of the Year  
 January  
 February  
 March  
 April  
 May  
 June  
 July  
 August  
 September  
 October  
 November  
 December

Days of the week  
 Monday  
 Tuesday  
 Wednesday  
 Thursday  
 Friday  
 Saturday  
 Sunday

When As soon as Once  
 The moment before after  
 By the time Until

Second Minute Hour Day  
 Dawn Midnight Week Fortnight Month Year  
 Decade Century Millennium

o'clock  
 five past  
 ten past  
 quarter past  
 twenty-five past  
 half past  
 twenty-five to  
 twenty to  
 quarter to  
 ten to  
 five two

Introduce paired, shared and peer reading activities for additional practice, to improve fluency, aid understanding and build confidence. Ref:

[www.dyslexiascotland.org](http://www.dyslexiascotland.org)

Books in audio format are an excellent way to access text, which their peers may be reading: ipad books, Calibre Audio library, [www.listeningbooks.org](http://www.listeningbooks.org), pod-casts, [www.browsealoud.com](http://www.browsealoud.com)

# Dyslexia Friendly Primary Classrooms


## Writing

- introduce cursive writing at an early stage
- minimise copying and avoid lengthy dictation, encourage proofreading
- look for quality rather than quantity
- modelled, shared and guided writing
- use word walls and provide a 'try page' for all written activities
- provide pencil grips and a variety of writing tools
- use bullet pointing or scaffolding e.g. mind maps and writing frames


**A pupil's handwriting can be improved and supported by:**

- Developing their fine motor skills by improving dexterity and muscle strength in their hands.
- Developing their visual perception and processing skills i.e. by using tracking, dot to dot, mazes, lined paper, 3D models of letters, cues for left/right etc.
- Modelling, showing and telling pupils what you want.
- Providing appropriate writing tools and writing materials i.e. grips, pencils, rulers, writing slopes, correct seating and word processors.

**Left/right confusion**  
This is my left hand it makes an L shape.



**be right**  
for right hander



**decide**  
for left hander



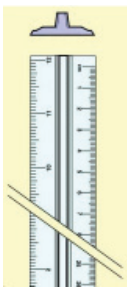
**Say 'Hubba Bubba'**  
Write an h and then close it to make a b.

h → b



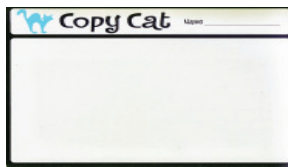
**bed**

**Ruler**

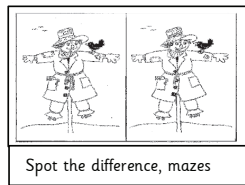


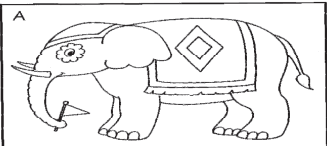


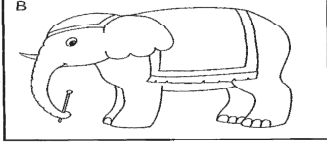
**Copy Cat**




Spot the difference, mazes




A 

B 

Make the picture the same

**Activities to improve strength and dexterity include:**

- Exercises for shoulder, arm and hand strength
- Pegboard, lacing, beading, sewing activities
- Lego /connect building
- Squeeze balls
- Games: Pick Up Sticks, timed shape sorting






acdegoq  
bhkmnpr  
fijltz  
suvwxy




Traditional ABC and cursive wipe boards.  
Double sided lined wipe boards



To develop writing activities choose the correct level to provide development through progression e.g.

- Sorting pictures
- Matching pictures and words
- Sequencing pictures
- Sequencing pictures and words
- Matching pictures and sentences
- Write a sentence under a picture

**Teach explicitly how to**

- Mind map, use spider webs with pictures, words, and sentences, make flow charts and complete cloze activities.
- Bullet point and use a variety of writing frames.
- Tape, Video, Present a PowerPoint for a story.
- Use different styles of writing for specific audiences and write different styles of poems.

To help limit writing demands allow the use of alternatives.

- Oral questioning, 'Talk about' or record speech
- Bullet points, Labelled diagrams / maps
- Object sorts / matching labels to objects
- Flow charts/mind mapping/ spider webs
- 3D, 2D Models / paintings/ posters
- Drama: role play
- Encourage the use of word processing
- Highlighting /circling / ticking answers
- Making games to reinforce learning.

**Give plenty of time to complete any writing.**



Teach word processing encourage the use of laptops and alpha smarts

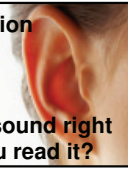
**Teach proofreading skills**

Use a **C.O.P.S**, check for



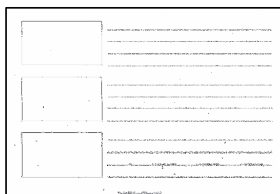
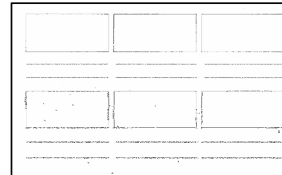
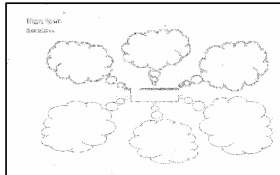
**C**apitals,  
**O**missions,  
**P**unctuation,  
**S**pelling

**Punctuation by ear!**



Does is sound right when you read it?

If using a cloze activity always include the words:



Plan,  
 Organise,  
 Write,  
 Edit,  
 Redraft



**POWER**

Fill in the missing words  
**My Twin Brian**

I have an \_\_\_\_\_ twin. His name is Brian. When he was a small \_\_\_\_\_ he got into all \_\_\_\_\_ of trouble. Being identical meant I got blamed for things that he did because no one could tell us apart.

Once he \_\_\_\_\_ it was about time we left home. He made me \_\_\_\_\_ dad's car down the driveway and out onto the main road. It is a \_\_\_\_\_ to drive on the road when you are only \_\_\_\_\_.

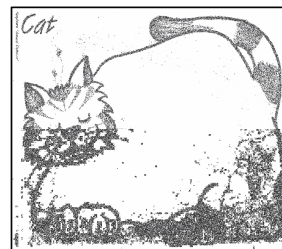
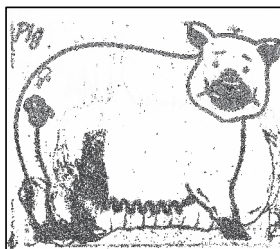
He used a pet \_\_\_\_\_ called Cling. One day he brought Cling into school. Cling decided to sit on \_\_\_\_\_ out of his cage. He then tried to \_\_\_\_\_ and frighten every child in the school. I was very \_\_\_\_\_ after that and never even told a \_\_\_\_\_ I got into trouble with Mrs Valentine our teacher. I got the blame for being \_\_\_\_\_ to animals.

The local news came when mum was cooking in my room. He decided to add some \_\_\_\_\_ . Then he added one of them about \_\_\_\_\_ . How nice he thought it would be. He explained to mum that he wanted to give her a bit of a \_\_\_\_\_ . She was \_\_\_\_\_ with shock. That night there was a terrible fire. I went into hiding.

Eventually Dad had to \_\_\_\_\_ mum to let him stay. He promised he would be kind and recognised that in order to survive he must not be \_\_\_\_\_ . What a terrible child he was! But never \_\_\_\_\_ he is still my best friend!

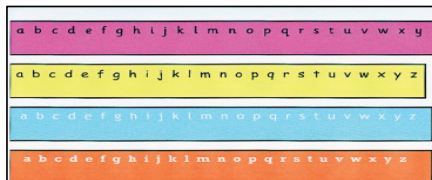
Identical child bonds identical drive crime nice  
 he shy like scare pygmy spiders unkind  
 mind wild better died surprise nice

Use frameworks to structure ideas during the steps to a final piece of work or to display the final piece of work.



When a child is writing:

- Use 'post its' to give a spelling
- Allow a 'try page'
- Keep a wipe board handy
- Use spellcheckers
- Allow the use of alphabet strips to confirm letter formation.



# Dyslexia Friendly Primary Classrooms

## Spelling

- use a cumulative, structured and multi-sensory spelling programme
- teach 'See it right' spelling strategy (for use on a try page)
- accept logical spelling (do not overcorrect)
- highlight the tricky bits
- use mnemonics for phonically irregular words
- use games and ICT to develop spelling skills and knowledge
- avoid 'spelling tests'- no failure only feedback

Multisensory modes of processing information make use of all the sensory channels to maximise the stimulation of connections and memory. They help to ensure that information is absorbed and stored.



Spelling is rarely consistent for a pupil who is dyslexic. So it does not help to make them 'copy' words several times. Provide them with a structured way in which to drill and practise words more consistently. Offer them strategies for irregular and tricky words by finding a way that suits them best.

To promote effective spelling (and reading!) a systematic, cumulative and structured phonic programme is recommended to teach pupils the sound system of the English language. The better understanding a teacher has of the structure of our language the better they are at supporting their pupils with dyslexia. Implementing a strong multisensory approach to the teaching of any phonic programme will ensure that spelling skills become strengthened e.g. The BELB Peripatetic Support Service uses the Have a Go! Spelling Programme and the Sounds and Words Support Materials for those pupils who may need extra support, reinforcement and rehearsal of spellings. See resources.



### Look does not mean a quick glance:

- Matching the letter symbol to a sound.
- Identifying familiar parts in a word 'clock, truck, fleck
- Identifying and highlighting interesting and easy bits of a word **sing, ring, bring**.
- Focusing on the structure of a word (plurals, prefixes and suffixes, roots and endings).
- Draw a picture to remember the tricky bit or a tricky word.
- Identify any hidden little words within a longer word.
- Look at the word, take a picture of it in your mind, then see it on a blank wall.
- Encourage pupils to look for support from the class word wall.

- Saying the sounds and feeling where the sounds are made in the mouth.
- Saying the sounds and looking in a mirror to see where they are made.
- Saying the word while looking at it.
- Saying and tapping out the individual syllables
- Singing the letters or sounds of a word.
- Saying the word as it is spelt but not as it sounds e.g. Wed-nes-day, tem-per-a-ture
- Using different voices e.g. parrot, robot and American.
- Write the word the way you say it, but 'see it right' have you the right variation?

### Good listening is essential

- Teacher models and pupils make pure sounds.
- Pupils matching the sound to a letter symbol.
- Practise blending sounds together to produce words orally (reading talk)
- Practise stretching and breaking down a word orally (spelling talk)
- Practise manipulating sounds, mat without 'm' is?
- Distinguishing between sounds i.e. 'p' and 'th'.
- Tapping the phonemes on the fingers, beginning with the thumb (RH) little finger (LH).
- Practise producing rhyme i.e. cat fat sat
- Spot the odd one out: i.e. man fan tap
- Listen to word origins.

- Tracing out the words/letters with a finger on sandpaper or in sand.
- Building the words using wooden, plastic, foam or letter cards (jumbles, omitting a sound)
- Writing and rewriting on a wipe board using cursive script
- Drawing around the whole word shape.
- Feeling under your chin for the syllables, word jigsaws for longer words.
- Writing words or parts of words in different coloured pen.
- Writing the word using sky writing.
- Highlighting tricky bits **teacher, ghost, action**
- In PE make letter shapes.

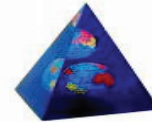
Some activities use combined senses making strong connections for pupils

### Create effective word walls to support spelling

1. As words are partially remembered by how they look.
2. Avoid using upper case letters (except with proper nouns) as this prevents them seeing the unique look of a word.
3. Use pictures, photographs, symbols to illustrate a word.
4. Highlight, underline, embolden or colour the tricky grapheme within a word.

Make a writing pyramid to support spelling for writing. Free download of Ros Wilson's available at [www.andrelleeducation.co.uk](http://www.andrelleeducation.co.uk)

- Vocabulary
- Connectives
- Openings
- Punctuation



WATCH X  
 Watch X  
 watch ✓

We wear a watch to tell the time

The children watch T.V.

ch

sh

Using correct letter formation, pictures and context to improve the understanding and spelling of 'words'.

Hook a sound to a visual cue

'ou'	'ow'	'ough'
out	cow	drought
south	now	bough
shout	how	
mouth	down	
found	brown	
sound	flower	
round		
ground		
house		
mouse		
around		

'Boo!' said the ghost

would  
could  
should

o u lucky duck

Display mnemonics to spell unusual and irregular words. Encourage pupils to make up their own to display on the word wall.

island

An island is land with sea around it.

Create posters for 'sounds' and variations and unusual spellings.

Use a variety of matching activities, word searches, board games, computer programmes to support spelling skills.

Weather		
avalanche	cool	gust
balmy	cyclone	hail
blazing	damp	heavy
blizzard	dense	hot
blowing	drizzly	humid
breeze	fair	hurrycane
burning	fickle	icy
calm	flood	lightning
chilly	fog	mist
clammy	freezing	muggy
clear	frosty	overcast
cloud	gale	rain
cold	global	rainbow
		rough
		severe
		warm
		wet
		wind
		scorching
		sleet
		shower
		sky
		snow
		squall
		still
		storm
		sunny
		thunder
		tornado
		tropical

Provide subject specific word lists available from [www.smartkids.co.uk](http://www.smartkids.co.uk)

Watch Out! Watch Out!  
 I can see a witch about

was  
wand  
want  
what  
wash  
swan  
swap  
swamp  
watch  
water

The wicked witch casts a spell on a and turns it into the sound 'o'.

Use the language of possibility:

'That's a great word can I spell it for you?'

'I will chunk it into syllables, are you ready?'

'You have a go and I'll help.'

'That's a tricky one I'll help.'

11

# Dyslexia Friendly Primary Classrooms

## Support for Parents

Good communication between teachers and parents is essential

**Parents are an essential part of the team** that works with children who have dyslexia. They will rely on you as their class teacher to give them strategies to support their child's learning.

- They help with reading at home and support homework.
- They get support from outside agencies i.e. opticians, OT's, speech and language therapists.
- They provide ongoing encouragement to a child who finds learning discouraging.



**Encourage Parents to support reading** by following some of these strategies and appropriate activities. Help them to avoid overloading their children with too many explanations or questions, which can adversely affect recall and comprehension. Parents do not want to make reading a stressful chore. What is needed is a balanced approach to teach, practice and promote reading for enjoyment.

### BEFORE READING:

Looking at the title page and discussing what the story might be about. Set the scene, explain any unfamiliar vocabulary, provide a brief outline of the story, practice decoding some phonetically regular words and play word games. Avoid any indication of disappointment through your tone of voice or body language. A struggling reader can very quickly pick up on your disappointment and the **cycle of failure** can begin.

### DURING READING:

At appropriate intervals ask questions, focus on the characters in the story, what might they say or think or feel? What are the main events of the story? Who said what? Where did they go? Why did that happen? I wonder? Ask the child to predict, what might happen next. Mix the choice of reading: read to the child as they follow text, read the text with the child, share the reading by sentence, paragraph, page. Provide the opportunity for rehearsal, children may also like to re-read a sentence or short passage to practise reading with fluency. Model first if necessary by showing them how.

### AFTER READING:

Discuss the events, retell the story to encourage sequencing and summarising. Make up an alternative ending. Ask the children for their opinions such as favourite bits, worst and best characters, whether they liked the book or not. Draw a picture. If carrying out the task in a non fiction book i.e. baking a cake then make the cake. Play word detective; find tricky words on specific pages, words that begin with, words that end with, giving visual and page number clues if necessary. Encourage children to attempt spelling specific words that you have chosen on a wipe board.

## Encourage Parents to support spelling

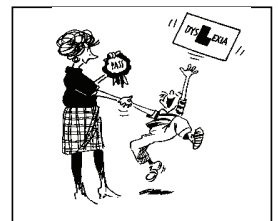
- Tell them about the spelling programme you are going to use and explain how they can support it at home, by using a wipe board, playing word games completing word searches and looking for the words in their reading books.
- Provide an overview of the sounds so that they have a better understanding of how our language is structured. Explain that progression is structured and cumulative.
- Encourage parents to request that spellings be written down by the child rather than having them request letter names. (Provide a wipe board and pen for home)
- Encourage them to highlight tricky bits, break down words into syllables, use mnemonics and and silly voices to make difficult and irregular words memorable.
- Encourage them to put the spellings into sentences to provide model sentences to develop their child's understanding and meaning of the words
- Keep them informed of progress and be there to answer their questions.
- Encourage them to play oral listening games i.e. I spy, Words that rhyme?
- Provide a list of effective word game sites for the use on home computers to aid over learning.



For a good parent guide on reading and choosing books visit:  
[www.barringtonstoke.co.uk](http://www.barringtonstoke.co.uk)  
 Google: 'Guide to choosing dyslexia friendly books for kids'  
 (published by Waterstones)

### For more advice and information try:

[www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)  
[www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk)  
[www.arkellcentre.org.uk](http://www.arkellcentre.org.uk)  
[www.dyslexia-parnet.com](http://www.dyslexia-parnet.com)  
[www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk)  
[www.parentline.org.uk](http://www.parentline.org.uk)



## Dyslexia Friendly Primary Classrooms

Understanding a psychologist's report: explanations of some terms used. (Source : Dyslexia Scotland)

Skill	Means	May cause difficulties in
Short-term auditory memory	Cannot hold information while processing it	Mental arithmetic, multiplication tables, learning by heart, following instructions, spelling, remembering what he has heard, attentive listening
Visual memory	Remembering shapes or patterns	Checking spelling, accurate reading, copying shapes, language learning, diagrams
Auditory sequencing	Managing sequential order in material heard	Oral spelling or tables, dictionary and reference skills, following instructions, note-taking
Visual sequencing	Organising symbols or shapes in order	Spelling (especially irregular words), copying, arithmetic routines, some aspects of CDT
Visuomotor skill (or eye hand coordination)	Co-ordination of vision and movement	Handwriting , ball skills, PE clumsiness, using instruments in maths, conducting experiments in science, drawing
Visuospatial ability	Perception of objects in space, position, distance, speed, abstract form	Page layout, aspects of handwriting, relative size, map work, shape work in maths, team sports
Listening or auditory comprehension	Processing the spoken word	Following instructions, attending to any verbal material, distractible, low attention span, easily confused, literacy learning. May depend on following others are doing.
Auditory discrimination	Hearing fine differences between sounds	Even when this is said to be satisfactory there may be difficulties with phonology, which will affect literacy and foreign language learning
Phonological awareness	Perception of sounds within words	Sequence of sounds in words, segmentation of syllables, rhyme, alliteration, automatic sound symbol recognition
Speed of information processing	Inefficiency with the management of verbal information.	Most classroom activities

# Dyslexia Friendly Primary Classrooms



## Where can I find out more?

The internet provides us with numerous web sites. Here are a few contacts which we have found useful and will help you get going in your quest for further information and resources for your classroom. These are only a small selection please add to this list and keep it close by for quick reference. The reference books listed are our own personal choice there are many more which you might also find informative. Let us know!

**General Resources:** Seek advice and resources from the Peripatetic Support Teacher in your school or arrange an appointment at our Reading Centre in Ulidia Teachers Resource Centre: 02890491058  
[www.senteacher.org](http://www.senteacher.org) Free worksheets to download and make also word searches, dice and games.  
[www.speciadirect.com](http://www.speciadirect.com): Special needs materials and games to purchase.

[www.thedyslexiaishop.co.uk](http://www.thedyslexiaishop.co.uk) : Sells specifically identified 'dyslexia support' materials.

[www.primaryclassroomresources.co.uk](http://www.primaryclassroomresources.co.uk) Offers a range of material for sale and free downloads.

[www.learningspace.co.uk](http://www.learningspace.co.uk) Materials available to purchase on line or visit their excellent shop in Belfast: 11a Fountain Centre, College Street Belfast BT1 6ET

[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/ks1bitesize/literacy](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/ks1bitesize/literacy)  
Interactive website with games

[www.barringtonstoke.co.uk](http://www.barringtonstoke.co.uk) Reading books and advice on choosing books, this site also provides a good parent guide on reading.

[www.betterbooks.co.uk](http://www.betterbooks.co.uk), [www.sen.books.org](http://www.sen.books.org) both sell reference books on all aspects of special needs, teaching resources and materials.

**Free symbols: if you are making your own materials i.e. visual timetables etc.**

[www.enchantedlearning.com](http://www.enchantedlearning.com)

[www.pdictionary.com](http://www.pdictionary.com)

[www.usevisualstrategies.com](http://www.usevisualstrategies.com)

[www.do2learn.com](http://www.do2learn.com)

**Other web sites worth a visit:**

[www.woodland-junior.kent.sch](http://www.woodland-junior.kent.sch)

Click into their literacy zone for lots of literacy games for words and spelling, punctuation, grammar and writing text.

[www.kirklandneuk.renfrewshire.sch.uk](http://www.kirklandneuk.renfrewshire.sch.uk)

Click into their 'Website Library' which lists excellent connections to useful web sites

[www.everybodywrites.org.uk](http://www.everybodywrites.org.uk). Provides a range of writing ideas from Pie Corbett.

[www.superkids.com](http://www.superkids.com) : For more games and printable worksheets

[www.brainybetty.com](http://www.brainybetty.com) : Provides fonts and backgrounds for more effective presentations.

[www.icanlearn.com](http://www.icanlearn.com) : Eye exercises to improve learning and visual processing

\* See also the assistive technology section

**Information:** For the Inclusion Development Programme on dyslexia go to

[www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk).

See also:

[www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk)

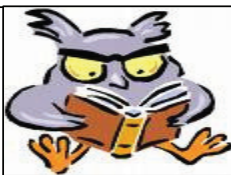
[www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)

[www.dyslexiascotland.org](http://www.dyslexiascotland.org)

[www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk](http://www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk)

[www.dyslexic.com](http://www.dyslexic.com)

[www.nida.org.uk](http://www.nida.org.uk)



**Reference materials and books:**

The rose report: [www.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk)

DENI: Developing a dyslexia friendly learning Environment

Cap it all, A practical manual for assessing individual Needs: Fil Came and Gavin Reid ISBN 978-0-9531055-4-0 [www.learningworks.org.uk](http://www.learningworks.org.uk)

Improving working memory, supporting students learning: Tracy Packiam Alloway ISBN 978-1-84920-748-5 SAGE Publications

Removing dyslexia as a barrier to achievement: The Dyslexia Friendly Schools Toolkit: Neil Mackay ISBN 190384203-4

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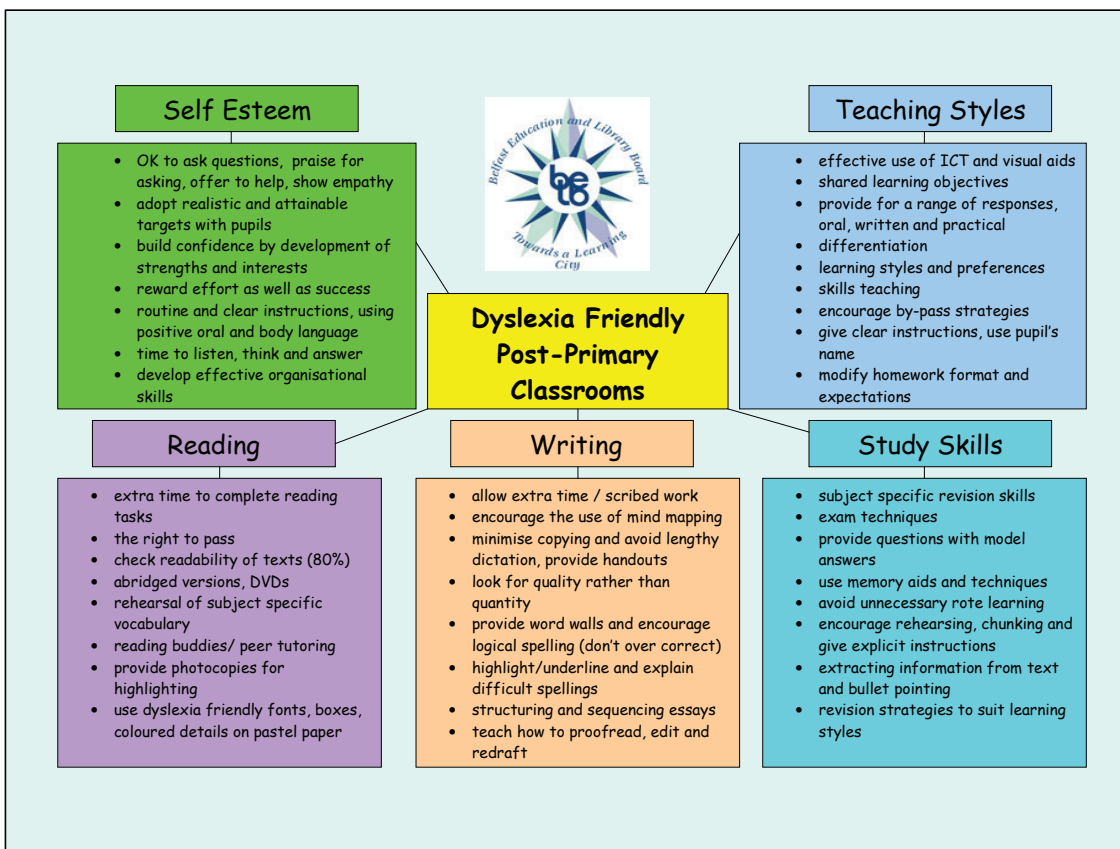




# BELB Peripatetic SpLD Support Service

Strategies, modifications and adjustments to support the development of a dyslexia friendly classroom

## Dyslexia Friendly Post Primary Classrooms



These suggestions do not represent a definitive list and should be added to as you develop additional strategies and adjustments to meet the needs of students with dyslexia in your classroom. January 2011

## Dyslexia Friendly Post Primary Classrooms

### Self-esteem

- OK to ask questions, praise for asking, offer to help, show empathy.
- Adopt realistic and attainable targets with pupils.
- Build confidence by development of strengths and interests.
- Reward effort as well as success.
- Provide routine and clear instructions, using positive oral and body language.
- Give learners time to listen, think and answer.
- Help to develop effective organisational skills.

**Use positive language** avoid idioms, sarcasm and double meanings.

- \* Give specific guidelines and tips for improving.
- \* Sandwich constructive criticism between two pieces of praise.
- \* Comment on the work, not the person. (avoid over marking)

**Organisation of their notes:**

- Use particular colours of paper, folders, dividers, notebooks for different subjects/topics
- Use wide lined A4 paper
- Leave wide margins
- Leave gaps and spacing
- Use coloured pens and highlighters
- Use headings and subheadings
- Encourage underlining
- Bullet point with either numbers or letters
- Write only on one side of the paper
- Loose notes can be organised into  
**Main Point - Supporting Points - Summary**



Help your students by colour coding and labelling your resources.

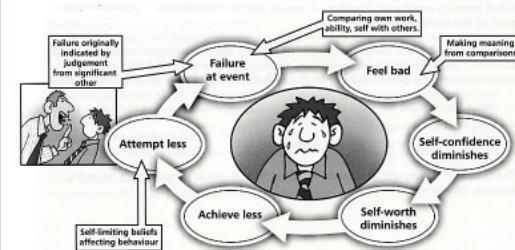
**OK to ask questions.** Many students ask questions to confirm their learning and aid processing. If you consider an answer to be inappropriate thank the student for asking and explain that maybe you haven't explained the topic clearly enough. **Do not respond** 'Were you not listening?'

**Build confidence** by seating the dyslexic student where you can give help easily or allow them to sit beside a 'supportive' peer. Reinforcement of their strengths i.e. 'I saw that brilliant goal you scored last week at the football match!'

Consider grouping students not according to their literacy abilities but according to their interests and understanding of a topic. Their oral and comprehension strengths need acknowledged.

### Watch out for the failure cycle!

Source:  
The dyslexia  
pocketbook



**Organisation around school:**

Transition booklet before arriving in school.  
School visits prior to joining. Timetable in colour using different colours for each subject.  
Maps of the school in diaries  
Time tables with a clock face to show start of lesson.



Students with dyslexia need time to process

**Here are 15 things teachers can do to raise the self esteem in individual pupils**

1. In the mornings say "hello" and smile
2. Notice and name the pupil
3. Listen well, so you need to ask questions
4. Create a past to reminisce about
5. Laugh and share a joke
6. Remember birthdays and events (not for the whole school!)
7. Praise in writing when you mark work
8. Respect family, culture, history
9. I saw this and thought of you
10. Share football teams, music, sweets!
11. ...interact in the playground
12. Promote by telling good stories
13. Acknowledge something they are good at
14. Contribute to the X factor (In school look for it in every child)
15. Recognise your pupils not just in class (Source: Tim Brighouse)

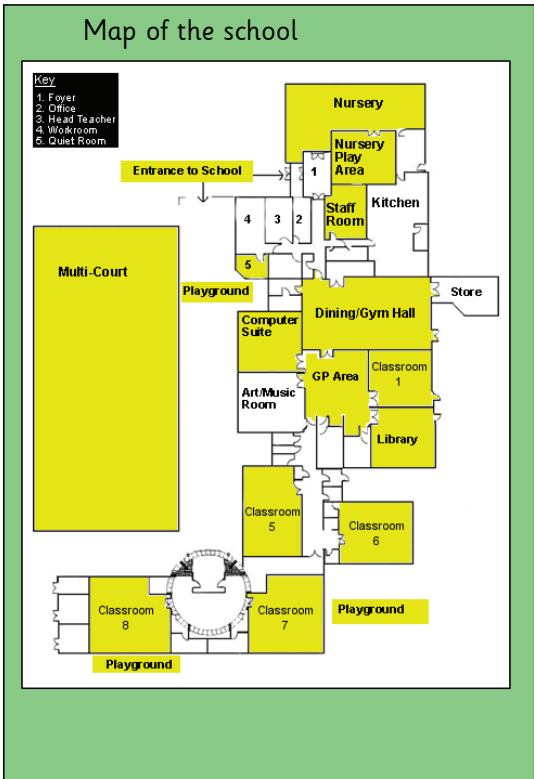
When marking work try:

- Success
- Tip
- Think



**Improved organisational skills will support self esteem**

**Provide personal checklists of equipment.**



Monitor the correct use of the homework diary and include parents.

Does the school produce its own school diary?

- All Staff names
- School Rules
- School lay out
- School phone numbers etc....

Does the school make full use of its website?

**Coloured timetable - subject coded.**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00	English	Maths	Science	MFL	Maths
10:00	B	R	E	A	K
10:30	Maths	Science	English	IT	Science
11:30	PE	English	RE	Science	IT
12:30	L	U	N	C	H
1:30	MFL	Technology	Games	Maths	RE
2:30	Music	Technology	Games	PSHE	English
3:30	Home	Home	Home	Home	Home

## Dyslexia Friendly Post Primary Classrooms

### Teaching Styles

- Make effective use of ICT and visual aids.
- Share your learning objectives.
- Provide for a range of responses, oral, written and practical.
- Differentiation.
- Be aware of learning styles and preferences.
- Teaching skills rather than content.
- Encourage and allow by-pass strategies.
- Give clear instructions, use pupil's name.
- Modify homework format and expectations.

**Visual aids** can also mean supplementing information with a strong visual impact. This could be natural gesture, facial expression, use of pictures, video, DVD's, quick drawings on a flip chart, use of an interactive whiteboard, links with the internet, use of real objects, using your own mind map, flow chart and time lines on the board.

**Share your learning objectives and tasks. Trying to learn anything without first getting the big picture is like trying to do a jigsaw puzzle without the picture on the box**

**Skills teaching:** students can be helped to organise their tasks if they are taught to:

- Skim and scan a page.
- Sort for information.
- Determine priorities.
- Make considered judgements.

**Differentiation :**

**Input:** 'Must, Should, Could'  
Task ladder of difficulty  
Choice of tasks





**Support:** How much to give?  
And who can give it?  
Learning preferences

**Outcome:** How to present it.  
Marking, what to mark for.  
Amount to be presented

**Allow the use of by pass strategies:**

laptops, dictaphones, audio books, spellcheckers, abridged versions of novels, text-to-speech software

### Sensory Preferences

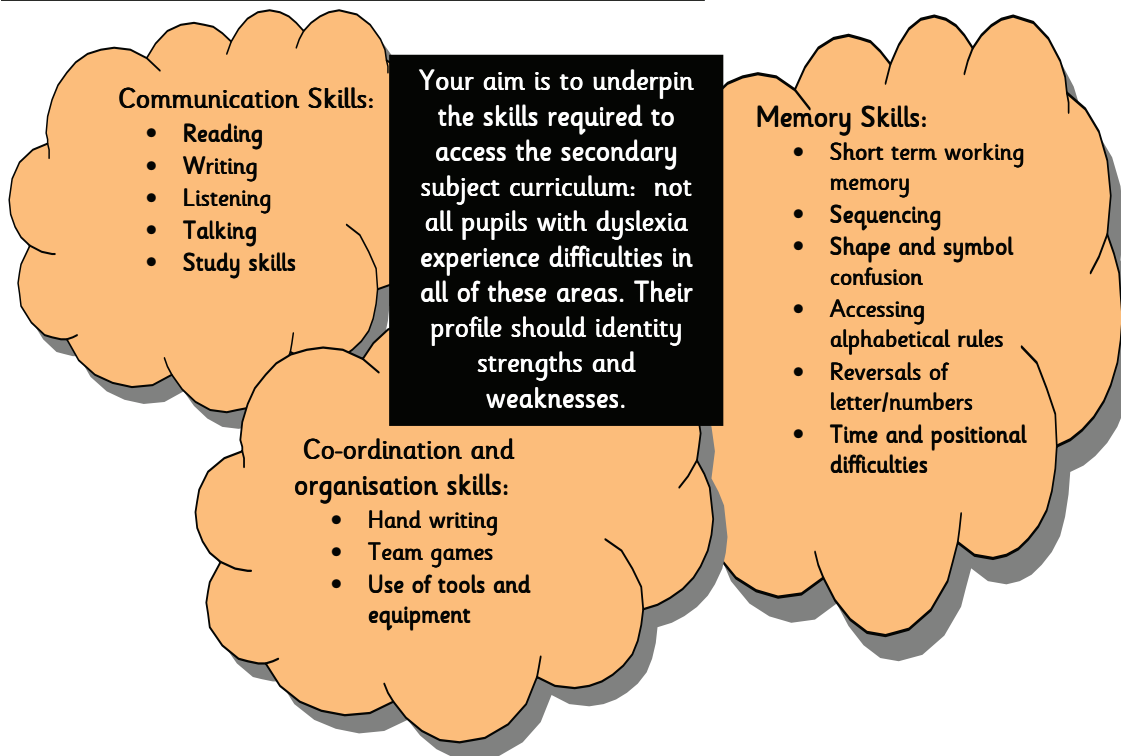
Visual	Auditory	Tactile	Kinaesthetic
			
Reading Text	Hearing monologue	Touching	Physical motion and external movement
Seeing diagrams, pictures and images	Listening to and taking part in discussions	Handling	Internal motion i.e. e-motion feeling good about a teacher or subject
Internal vision i.e. imagination	Self talk and internal dialogue	Manipulation	

**Extended use of concrete materials may be required in subjects such as maths, permit counting on their fingers.**

**Give clear instructions:**

1. If you have a lot of information or instructions to give, break it down into 'shorter chunks', pausing after each as a long block can be difficult to process.
2. Say things in the order you want them done.
3. Cut down on the amount you say, studies show that adults talk 90% of the time in class. For a young person with dyslexia this can be overwhelming.
4. Slowing down your talking will allow students to get a chance to say more.
5. Avoid the use of complex sentences, 'put the one you thought it was next to the beaker that boiled'
6. Encourage dialogue: commenting on what they are doing, pausing and rather than asking questions encourage dialogue 'I see you have chosen that book to read, do you know the author?'
7. Pausing after you ask a question- rather than having an empty space turn and write something on the board or I'll be back to you in a moment for the answer.

Teaching Skills rather than content, what do they need?



Effective classroom strategies for any subject:

Vary class activities over a lesson and build in time for rests to reduce fatigue

Give only one instruction at a time and repeat instructions often.

Ask pupils to repeat instructions back- this not only provides a check that they have understood but they remember things better if they hear themselves speak.

Always give 'thinking time' to allow dyslexic pupils to process input and construct an appropriate response.

Encourage alternatives to writing especially through the use of ICT.

Try and pre-teach subject vocabulary, prior to a lesson by providing overviews of topic vocabulary

When having class discussions reinforce the answers given by pupils by repeating them back to the class in order to give the pupil with dyslexia time to process the information.

## Dyslexia Friendly Post Primary Classrooms

### Reading

- Allow extra time to complete reading tasks.
- Give the right to pass.
- Check the readability of texts (80%).
- Allow the use of abridged versions, DVDs.
- Rehearsal of subject specific vocabulary.
- Reading buddies/ peer tutoring.
- Provide photocopies for highlighting.
- Use dyslexia friendly fonts, boxes, coloured details on pastel paper.

**Allow extra time** as many dyslexic students are trying so hard to decode the writing they are unable to comprehend what they have read.

Either read to them, or let them listen to talking books. Do not assume or presume that students 'know' what style of reading is required for different tasks:

- exam questions
- reading to glean facts
- for specific information
- general overview
- pleasure

**When making notes from a text book** encourage students to initially

- Get an overview of the chapter by reading the first and last paragraphs, and by taking note of headings, subheadings, maps, charts and diagrams
- Think carefully about key words, by noting them down.
- Make a note of the book, chapter and page for later reference

**Introduce and rehearse subject specific vocabulary** and where possible provide graphic cues. Provide posters on the classroom walls as constant reminders of vocabulary, mathematical signs and formulae.

**Please give them the right to pass when reading aloud in class.**

**Provide photocopies of your notes** and make them easy to read by

- Making them clear, simple and uncluttered.
- Avoiding underlining as this may cause the writing to blur, use **bold** or colour.
- Highlighting **key words** in **bold**.
- Using a minimum size 12 point or 14 point font size with 1.5 spacing.
- Using key pictures to provide a **break** for the eyes.
- Inserting pictures or symbols to assist the learner make links and connections with the text and their own experiences.
- Putting key words into summary boxes, to let the reader get an idea at a glance.
- Avoiding too many changes in font. Choose dyslexia friendly fonts and avoid Times New Roman i.e. **Arial Comic Sans Trebuchet Verdana Tahoma SassoonCRInfant**
- If possible using colour, matt and paper that is not too thin..
- Keeping space uneven and not justified, as it makes tracking from one line to the next easier.

**Students with dyslexia need time to process**



To minimise visual difficulties

In pre-prepared materials highlight key words

Calibre Audio Library  
 listening-books.org  
 browsealoud.com

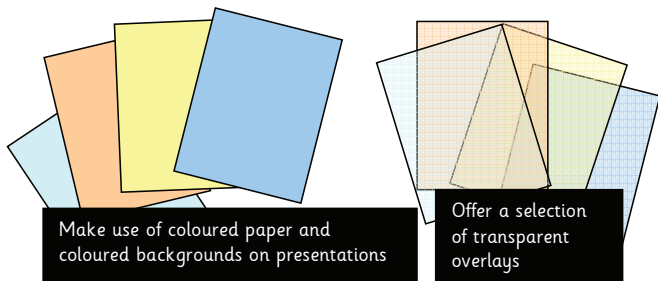
Seat out of direct sunlight and away from fluorescent lighting or adjust the lighting in the classroom.

Scan short text into computer to take advantage of text speech.

Watch Out! Copy right issues

Key subject information should only be read out by the teacher or a component reader.

Use fun activities to learn subject specific vocabulary: word searches, syllable chunks, class countdown, conundrums.



Make use of coloured paper and coloured backgrounds on presentations

Offer a selection of transparent overlays



White line paper

- \* To stop pupils losing their place in text begin each sentence with a different coloured dot.
- \* To make tracking easier.

To support reading and understanding

In practical subjects pair up a dyslexic pupil with a good reader for peer support and safety.

Create help mats to support your subject area, keep them on a memory stick and display in any classroom's interactive white board.

In practical subjects:

Label all equipment cupboards with pictures as well as words.

Try not to move things around

Provide illustrations to help them remember scientific vocabulary and terminology.

Always show and name equipment when giving instructions or explaining new concepts.



My 100 Square

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

My Maths Mat

1 whole	
$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$
$\frac{1}{3}$	$\frac{2}{3}$
$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{3}{4}$
$\frac{1}{5}$	$\frac{4}{5}$
$\frac{1}{6}$	$\frac{5}{6}$
$\frac{1}{7}$	$\frac{6}{7}$
$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{7}{8}$
$\frac{1}{9}$	$\frac{8}{9}$
$\frac{1}{10}$	$\frac{9}{10}$

Fractions	Decimal	Percentage
1	1	100%
$\frac{1}{2}$	0.5	50%
$\frac{1}{4}$	0.25	25%
$\frac{3}{4}$	0.75	75%
$\frac{1}{10}$	0.1	10%
$\frac{1}{5}$	0.2	20%
$\frac{1}{2}$	0.5	50%
$\frac{1}{4}$	0.25	25%
$\frac{1}{8}$	0.125	12.5%

Equivalences

2D Shapes

My Maths Mat

3D Shapes

Maths Symbols

+	-	×	÷	=
add, plus, total, sum, addition, more, altogether, increase	take away, minus, subtract, fewer, difference between, decrease	multiply, times, lots of groups of, product, times, repeated addition	divide, divided by, share, divided into equal groups, share equally	equal, makes, total is the same as

Metric Measurements

1 centimetre (cm) = 10 millimetres (mm)  
 1 metre (m) = 100 centimetres  
 1 kilometre (km) = 1000 metres  
 1 kilogram (kg) = 1000 grams (g)  
 1 tonne (t) = 1000 kilograms  
 1 litre (l) = 1000 millilitres (ml)  
 1 litre = 1000 cm<sup>3</sup>  
 1cm<sup>3</sup> = 1millilitre

<p><b>Item</b> Abrasive paper Sand paper</p> <p><b>Process</b> To sand, sanding - I used fine sand paper to get a smooth finish on the wood.</p> <p><b>Connected words</b> Wood, finish, finishing, smooth, smoothing, fine, coarse, rough.</p>	<p><b>Item</b> Wet and dry abrasive paper</p> <p><b>Process</b> To finish, finishing - using wet and dry paper I smoothed down the edge of the acrylic.</p> <p><b>Connected words</b> Water, thermoplastic, plastic, smooth, shine, rub, heat.</p>
<p><b>Item</b> Files</p> <p><b>Process</b> To file, filing, filed. - I smoothed the edge of the metal with a file.</p> <p><b>Connected words</b> Wood, metal, plastic, edges, shape, rough, finish, safety.</p>	<p><b>Item</b> Chisel</p> <p><b>Process</b> To chisel, chiselling - I cut out the joint using a saw and chisel.</p> <p><b>Connected words</b> Wood, joint, sharp, blade, handle, safety, size.</p>
<p><b>Item</b> Try square</p> <p><b>Process</b> To mark out, marking out. - I made sure the line was at 90 degrees using a try square.</p> <p><b>Connected words</b> Measure, marking knife, right angle, precise.</p>	<p><b>Item</b> Screw</p> <p><b>Process</b> To screw, screwing, to join, joining - The joint was strengthened by screws.</p> <p><b>Connected words</b> Screw driver, thread, head, slot, cross.</p>
<p><b>Item</b> Tape measure</p> <p><b>Process</b> To measure, measuring. - I measured out the correct length using the tape measure.</p> <p><b>Connected words</b> CM, mm, length, height, distance.</p>	<p><b>Item</b> Scissors</p> <p><b>Process</b> To cut, cutting - I cut the card template out using scissors.</p> <p><b>Connected words</b> Paper, card, detail, hand, ergonomic.</p>

<p><b>Term</b> Hardwood</p> <p><b>Description</b> Wood from deciduous or broad leaved trees. Slow growing.</p> <p><b>Types</b> Mahogany, ash, beech, balsa, oak.</p>	<p><b>Term</b> Softwood</p> <p><b>Description</b> Wood from coniferous trees, with needles not leaves.</p> <p><b>Types</b> Pine, Scots pine, spruce, fir.</p>
<p><b>Term</b> Renewable</p> <p><b>Description</b> Energy or material that comes from a source that will not run out.</p> <p><b>Connected words</b> Green, eco friendly, sustainable, energy saving, life cycle.</p>	<p><b>Term</b> Life cycle</p> <p><b>Description</b> What happens to a product before, during use and after its use.</p> <p><b>Connected words</b> Recycle, renewable, reduce, sustainable materials, production.</p>
<p><b>Item</b> Packaging</p> <p><b>Process</b> To pack, package. - my packaging protects the product from damage.</p> <p><b>Connected words</b> Die cut, blister pack, heat sealed, glued, printed, not, mass produced.</p>	<p><b>Term</b> Thermoplastic</p> <p><b>Description</b> A plastic that can be melted and formed many times.</p> <p><b>Types</b> Acrylic, HIPS, ABS, PETE, HDPE, LDPE.</p>
<p><b>Term</b> Thermosetting plastic</p> <p><b>Description</b> Plastic that cannot be melted or reformed once set.</p> <p><b>Types</b> Melamine, Formaldehyde, epoxy resin, polyester resin, urea formaldehyde.</p>	<p><b>Term</b> Ergonomic</p> <p><b>Description</b> Using body measurements to design.</p> <p><b>Connected words</b> Anthropometrics, measurements, human, design, comfort, easy to use.</p>

## Dyslexia Friendly Post Primary Classrooms

### Writing

- Allow extra time / scribed work.
- Encourage the use of mind mapping.
- Minimise copying and avoid lengthy dictation, provide handouts.
- Look for quality rather than quantity.
- Provide word walls and encourage logical spelling (don't over correct).
- Highlight/underline and explain difficult spellings.
- Teach how to structure and sequence essays.
- Teach how to proofread, edit and redraft.

#### Provide alternatives to written recording:

- Bullet points
- Diagrams
- Models
- 'Talk about' or record speech
- Drama

#### Help For Handwriting:

- Correct seating/lighting
- Lap tops
- Writing tools
- Matt /coloured /quality paper
- Wider lines on paper
- Writing on one side only

#### Watch out!

Many Dyslexic pupils may also be dysgraphic and will need access to a lap top.

#### Teach proofreading skills:

C. O. P. S - Capitals, Omissions, Punctuation, Spelling

POWER - Plan, Organise, Write, Edit, Redraft



Highly recommended computer programme: **Read&Write GOLD**

#### Support note taking by:

- Allowing the use of abbreviations.
- Giving time to draw diagrams.
- Writing definitions very clearly.
- Allowing a friend or classmate to share notes.
- Encouraging the use of a personal dictaphones.
- Listing key words at the front of subject specific notebooks or files.
- Using a landscape position for mind mapping and coloured pens.

Putting printed information into their own words is a highly challenging task. The more scaffolding your students have the better they will respond to a writing task:

- Encourage them to complete background reading or preparation before the lesson by offering web pages, DVDs abridged versions, reference and talking books.
- Provide a range of key words, sentence starters and phrases (suggested by the students) which they can refer to during the writing task.
- Provide a scaffolding format to help them plan a sequence of events by using mind maps, time lines, writing trails and writing frames.



#### We will insist on:

- capital letters and full stops
- numbered questions
- starting at the margin
- paragraphs
- logical spelling



#### TIP TOPP for paragraphs

Time  
Ideas  
Person  
Theme  
Or  
Place  
Picture

Students with dyslexia need time to process



Practical Suggestions to support writing

Provide models of different types of writing

If using a cloze activity always include the words:

Fill in the missing words  
 My Twin Brian

I have an \_\_\_\_\_ twin. His name is Brian. When he was a small \_\_\_\_\_ he got into all \_\_\_\_\_ of trouble. Being identical meant I got blamed for things that he did because he never could talk or report.

Once, he \_\_\_\_\_ it was about time we left home. He made me \_\_\_\_\_ down the driveway and out onto the main road. It is a \_\_\_\_\_ to drive on the roads when you are only \_\_\_\_\_.

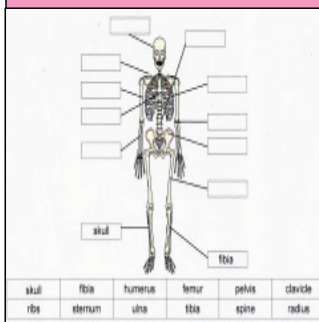
He owned a pet \_\_\_\_\_ called Cing. One day he brought Cing into school. Cing decided to \_\_\_\_\_ me off his cage. He then tried to \_\_\_\_\_ and frighten every child in the school. I was very \_\_\_\_\_ often cried and never ever told a \_\_\_\_\_ I got into terrible trouble with Miss Valentine our teacher. I got the blame for being \_\_\_\_\_ to animals.

The final straw came when mum went cooking a spicy curry. He decided to add some \_\_\_\_\_ Then he added one or two dead \_\_\_\_\_ How nice he thought it would be. He explained to mum that he wanted to give her a bit of a \_\_\_\_\_ She nervily \_\_\_\_\_ with shock. That night there was a terrible fight. I went into hiding.

Eventually Dad had to \_\_\_\_\_ mum to let him stay. He promised he would be kind and respectful that in order to survive he must not be so \_\_\_\_\_ What a terrible child he was. That never \_\_\_\_\_ he is still my best brother!

Identical child hands decided drove cream nose for shy bite slide gyftens spiders untold mind wild brother dead surprise nice

Provide blank copies of diagrams for completion clearly indicating where responses go.



Mind mapping and the use of ICT to produce a piece of writing.

Lap tops and Alpha Smarts

Do not assume that it is only in English that writing frames can be used or needed.

Provide essay guidelines and paragraph headings to support the structure of extended writing.

Pens and pencils

Make a writing pyramid:

- Vocabulary
- Connectives
- Openings
- Punctuation

Key words and thesaurus:

Rulers

Allow the use of spellcheckers and electronic talking dictionaries.

# Dyslexia Friendly Post Primary Classrooms

## Study Skills

- Teach subject specific revision skills.
- Teach exam techniques.
- Provide questions with model answers
- Use memory aids and techniques
- Avoid unnecessary rote learning
- Encourage rehearsing, chunking and give explicit instructions.
- Extracting information from text and bullet pointing.
- Revision strategies to suit learning styles.

### Teach subject specific revision skills

For essay writing:

- interpret the question
- plan the essay
- structure your ideas
- write in clear formal English

\*For revision develop oral answers in depth. Verbalise to clarify their thoughts

\*Make them aware of where to access additional information

\*Use mnemonics' to remember lists and formulae.

\*Use visualisation techniques to strengthen recall

Teach exam techniques by offering a multisensory way of employing strategies from each box to fully utilise the brain and maximise the learning potential

#### Visual left brained learner

- rewrite notes using topic phrases and bullet points
- underline headings in colour
- highlight key words
- use mnemonics and acrostics

#### Visual right brained learner

- 'post-its' for visual prompting
- convert notes to mind maps
- convert notes into cartoon strips
- use colour for highlighting
- convert notes into flow charts

#### Auditory learner

- read notes aloud
- record notes, quotations, questions and answers onto tapes
- explain a topic to someone else
- listen to set books and plays on tape

#### Kinaesthetic/tactile learner

- write and draw
- practise experiments
- handle equipment
- act out scenarios
- Ppace about while reciting information

Interpret and teach key words in exam questions explicitly e.g.

<b>Prove</b>	<b>Illustrate</b>	<b>Identify</b>
<b>Compare</b>	<b>Evaluate</b>	<b>Review</b>
<b>Summarise</b>	<b>Describe</b>	<b>Expand</b>
<b>Comment</b>	<b>Define</b>	<b>Verify</b>
<b>Outline</b>	<b>Contrast</b>	<b>Define</b>

Support coursework by:

- \*Defining the task
- \*Encouraging quality not quantity
- \* Using planning calendars for time management to work backwards from the hand-in date.



### How to cope with exam stress and anxiety:

Stress is Normal!

\*What do you do when your mind goes blank?  
*Start by thinking back to the room where you did your revision.*

\*What to do if halfway through writing an answer you have answered the question wrongly? *Rewrite the additional answer down in bullet points.*

Encourage self appraisal: How do I revise best, what works for me and what doesn't?

Unsupported copying should **NEVER** be the only source of information

- Provide printed or electronic notes in advance.
- Allow photocopies of other people's notes.
- When dictating spell out any technical or difficult words and also write them on the board (some may have difficulty copying only)
- Provide summaries of book chapters

Create wall displays in colour with photographs to show the 'dos' and 'don'ts' for the:

- Science lab
- PE centre
- Home economics room
- Dining hall

Memory and Shape / symbol / directional confusion

Read question aloud in chunks to help with meaning and short term memory.

Do not assume that abbreviations will always be remembered.

Allow the use of calculators/number squares for number work.

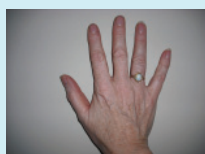
Don't fuss about forgotten equipment, keep spares handy.

Allow L shaped card to read the 100 table square

**Left/right confusion**  
 This is my left hand it makes an L



**Right hand**  
**Ring hand**



This won't work if you wear rings on lots of fingers.....most pupils aren't married and some schools may not allow rings. Do boys wear rings in school?

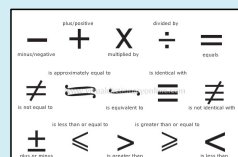
**b/d confusion:**

- Hubba Bubba
- 'b' right for right handers
- 'd' decide for left handers

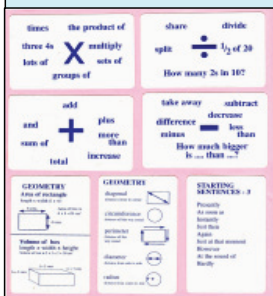


**b e d**

**Display symbol charts in the classroom or print and put into notebooks**



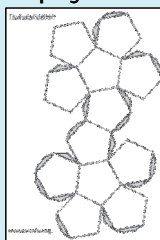
**Personal reference cards in a wallet**



**Use templates and stencils to emphasise the qualities of shape**

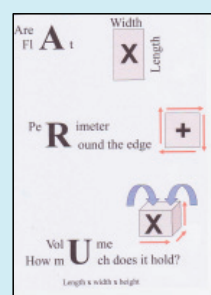


**Make 3D shapes label and display**



senteacher.com

**Display mnemonics**



Put directional arrows on graph axes

Teach flow diagrams to help pupils follow direction and instructions

Use visual strategies such as clock faces to support the use of analogue clocks and 'experience' the passing of time using a count down clock.



Teach formula using mnemonics, jingles and funny rhymes i.e. **Never Eat Shredded Wheat. N. E. S. W.**

### DYSLEXIA INDICATORS IN POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Dyslexia can be more than problems with reading and writing. The problem may be a perceptual, auditory receptive, memory based or processing deficit. Subject teachers are not expected to be able to diagnose these difficulties as such, but some general indicators are listed below. If several of these are observed frequently in the classroom, tick the relevant boxes and fill in the details of the pupil concerned and pass on to your Special/Additional Needs Co-ordinator for advice and support.

Pupil name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Quality of written work does not adequately reflect the known ability of the pupil in the subject.
- Good orally but very little written work is produced- many incomplete assignments
- Disappointing performance in timed tests and other assessments.
- Poor presentation of work- e.g. illegibility, mixed upper and lower case letters, poor spacing, copying errors, misaligned columns (especially in maths).
- Poor organisational skills- pupils unable to organise themselves or their work efficiently: brings wrong books or all books and frequently forgets to hand in work.
- Poor sequencing of work: appears to jump from one theme to another for no particular reason.
- Inability to memorise (poems, dates, modern languages) even after repeated practice.
- Shape and symbol confusion especially in maths.
- Difficulties in holding numbers in short term memory while performing calculations.
- Complains of headaches when reading; blurred print, text is glaring at them, swirling on the page.
- Unable to carry out operations one day which were previously done adequately.
- Unable to take in and carry out more than one instruction at a time.
- Poor depth perception-e.g. clumsy and uncoordinated, bumping into things, difficulties judging distances like the space between two chairs, poor at catching a ball.
- Poor self image, lacking in confidence, fear of new situations, may erase pieces of work unnecessarily.
- Tires quickly and work seems to be a disproportionate return for the effort involved in producing it.
- Easily distracted- either hyperactive or day dreaming

Others- please give details

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Subject \_\_\_\_\_

(Source Dyslexia Scotland)

Resource File for Special Educational Needs  
**READING, WRITING & SPELLING FOR CHILDREN WITH SEN**

<b>Skill</b>	<b>Means</b>	<b>May cause difficulties in</b>
<b>Short-term auditory memory</b>	Cannot hold information while processing it	Mental arithmetic, multiplication tables, learning by heart, following instructions, spelling, remembering what he has heard, attentive listening
<b>Visual memory</b>	Remembering shapes or patterns	Checking spelling., accurate reading, copying shapes, language learning, diagrams
<b>Auditory sequencing</b>	Managing sequential order in material heard	Oral spelling or tables, dictionary and reference skills, following instructions, note-taking
<b>Visual sequencing</b>	Organising symbols or shapes in order	Spelling (especially irregular words), copying, arithmetic routines, some aspects of DT
<b>Visuomotor skill (or eye hand coordination)</b>	Co-ordination of vision and movement	Handwriting , ball skills, PE clumsiness, using instruments in maths, conducting experiments in science, drawing
<b>Visuospatial ability</b>	Perception of objects in space, position, distance, speed abstract form	Page layout, aspects of handwriting, relative size, map work, shape work in maths , team sports
<b>Listening or auditory comprehension</b>	Processing the spoken word	Following instructions, attending to any verbal material, distractible, low attention span, easily confused, literacy learning. May depend on following others
<b>Auditory discrimination</b>	Hearing fine differences between sounds	Even when this is said to be satisfactory there may be difficulties with phonology, which will affect literacy and foreign language learning
<b>Phonological awareness</b>	Perception of sounds within words	Sequence of sounds in words, segmentation of syllables, rhyme, alliteration, automatic sound symbol recognition
<b>Speed of information processing</b>	Inefficiency with the management of streams of information, especially written symbols, as in copying	Most classroom activities

(Source: Dyslexia Scotland)

## Assistive technology

**Assistive technology is a product or service designed to enable independence:** Increasingly it is being used to support the learning of pupils with dyslexia. Research is limited but what exists indicates that word processing activities with enhanced supportive features significantly improve writing and spelling skills.

### Software

- typing
- word prediction
- word recognition
- screen reading, jaws
- voice recognition: dragon, microsoft vista,
- backgrounds and fonts



### Others

- easy speak
- Daisy books at [www.daisy.org](http://www.daisy.org) (digital accessible information system)



**It is essential that appropriate and safe use of computers and technology is taught to all students.**

### A note of caution:

School policy might limit the use of mobile phones. Practical difficulties can arise in the classroom ie electrical sockets. Not all pupils and teachers may enjoy using the technology therefore appropriate training for staff and pupils is essential. Try to ensure the technology is age appropriate. Be aware of copyright issues regarding ebooks.



**Appropriate training is essential for the pupil and teacher.**

### Portable Devices

- Mobile phones: recording messages, calendar, clock, memos, reminders. Apps from iphone.
- CapturaTalkv3: will take a photo of text and then read it.
- Computers/ lap tops
- Reading Pens
- Livescribe Pulse Smartpen
- Spell checkers / Talking dictionaries / thesaurus
- Dictaphones
- Audio books / CDs / CDRoms
- Talking calculators

**textHELP Read &Write Gold:** Assistive software designed to help with literacy difficulties. Promotes independence and inclusion in the classroom and at home. Reading and writing features include:

- text to speech
- converts text to sound on the move
- scan and read, including PDF documents
- enhanced, spell checker, sounds like, dictionary, word prediction
- mind mapping
- screen tinting
- fact folders for storing

[WWW.texthelp.com](http://WWW.texthelp.com)



"There's no delete key. You have to use the board eraser."

These suggestions only represent a sample of what is available; they are not a definitive list. Always seek advice before purchasing any assistive technology.

### Acknowledgements

**We would like to thank the staff of the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) Peripatetic Spld Support Service for their sound advice and their sharing of expertise. Thanks also to our colleagues Eilís Boyd and Sue Boyd for compiling this booklet.**

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# Peripatetic Support Service (SpLD)

# DYSLEXIA



# What is Dyslexia?

**‘Dyslexia is best described as a continuum of difficulties in learning to read, spell or write which persist despite appropriate learning opportunities. These difficulties are not typical of performance in most other cognitive and academic areas.’**

**There may be associated difficulties in such areas as:**

- **Phonological processing**
- **Short term memory**
- **Sequencing**
- **Number skills**
- **Motor function**
- **Organisational ability**

*Task Group on Dyslexia 2002*



# General Indicators

- **Appears bright but unable to get thoughts on paper**
- **Reading achievement is below expectation**
- **Memory problems**
- **Poor planning and organisational skills**
- **Apparent lack of concentration**
- **Tires easily**
- **Performs unevenly day to day**
- **Family history significant**
- **Brain based neurological disorder**

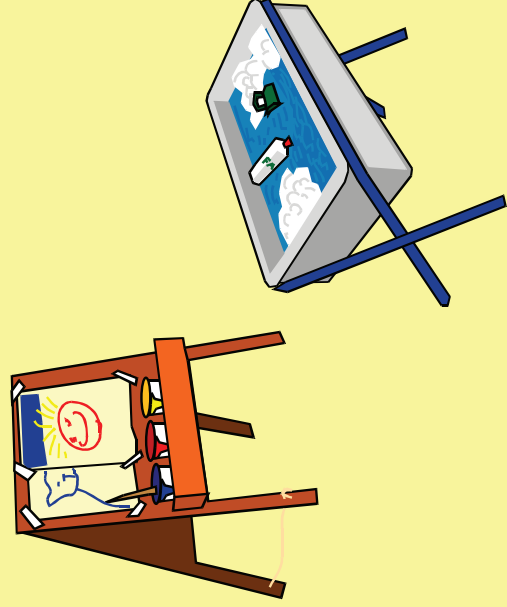


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# Indicators of Dyslexia 3-5 Years

**Difficulties with:**

- 1. Talking and Listening**
- 2. Early Literacy Skills**
- 3. Memory**
- 4. Motor Control**
- 5. Behaviour**



# Indicators of Dyslexia 5-11 years

**Difficulties with:**

- 1. Talking and Listening**
- 2. Reading**
- 3. Spelling**
- 4. Writing**
- 5. Memory**
- 6. Behaviour**

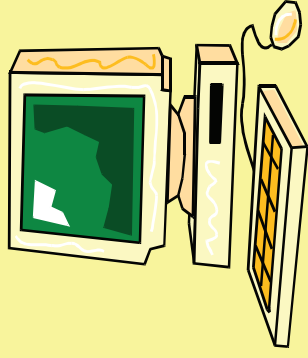


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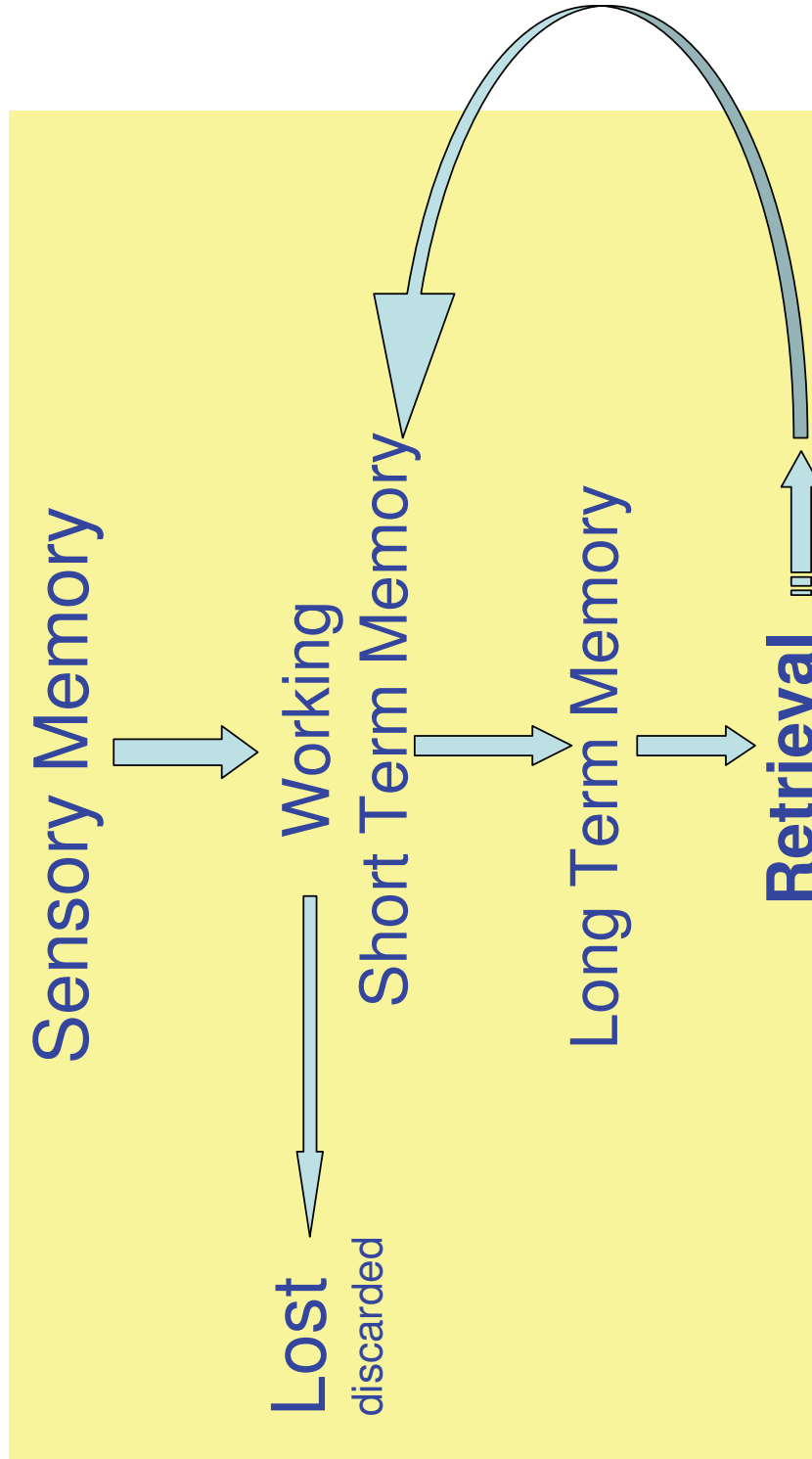
# Indicators of Dyslexia Post Primary

## Difficulties with:

- Speaking and Listening
- Reading
- Spelling
- Writing
- Memory
- Organisation and Integrating thoughts
- Motor coordination
- Behaviour

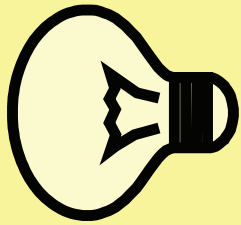


# General Indicators

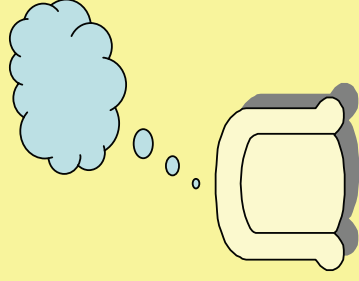


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# To remember something you must



- » Understand it
- » Get it into your memory
- » Think about it often
- » Use it often



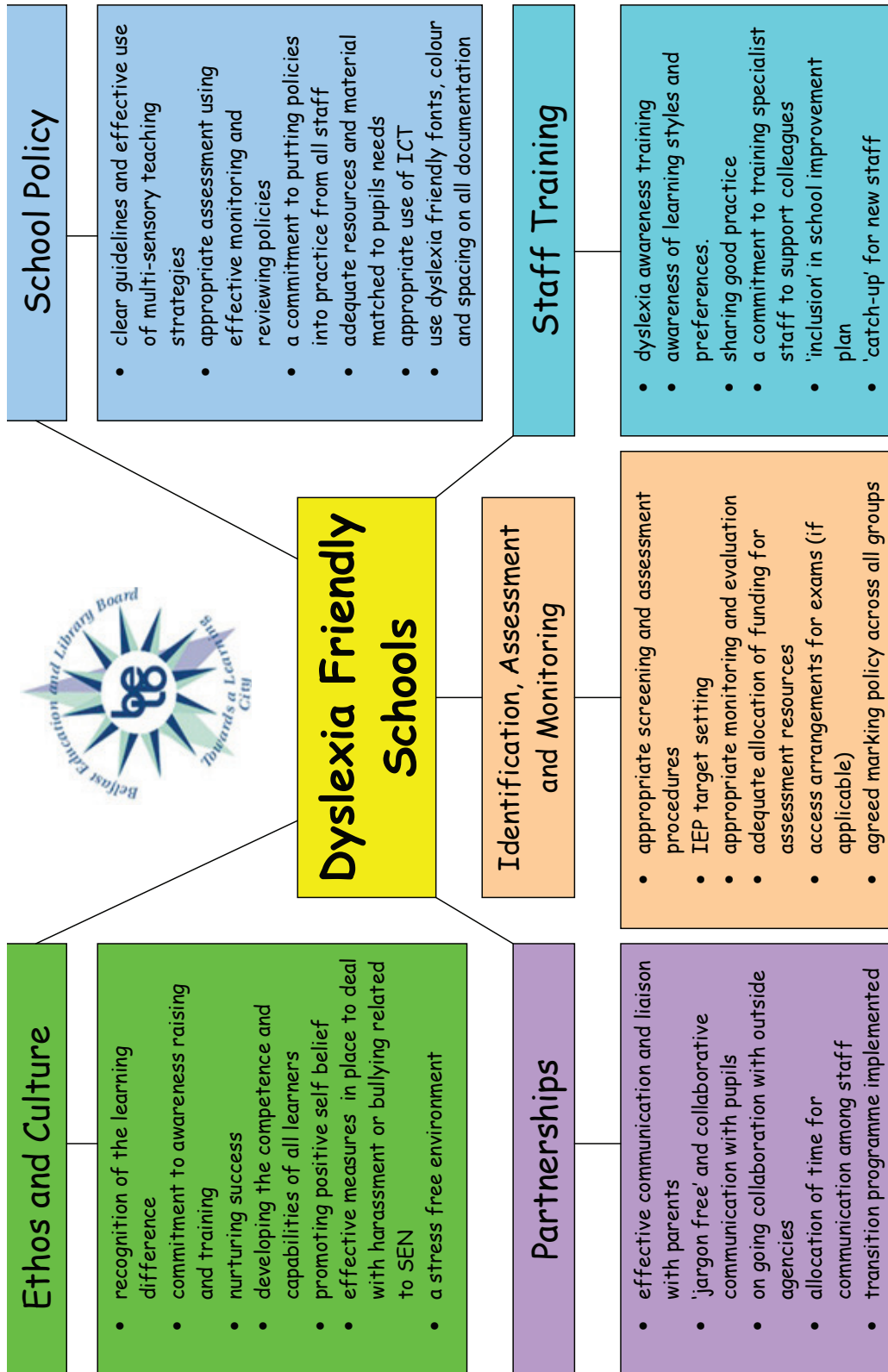


# Children with Dyslexia learn well when teachers -

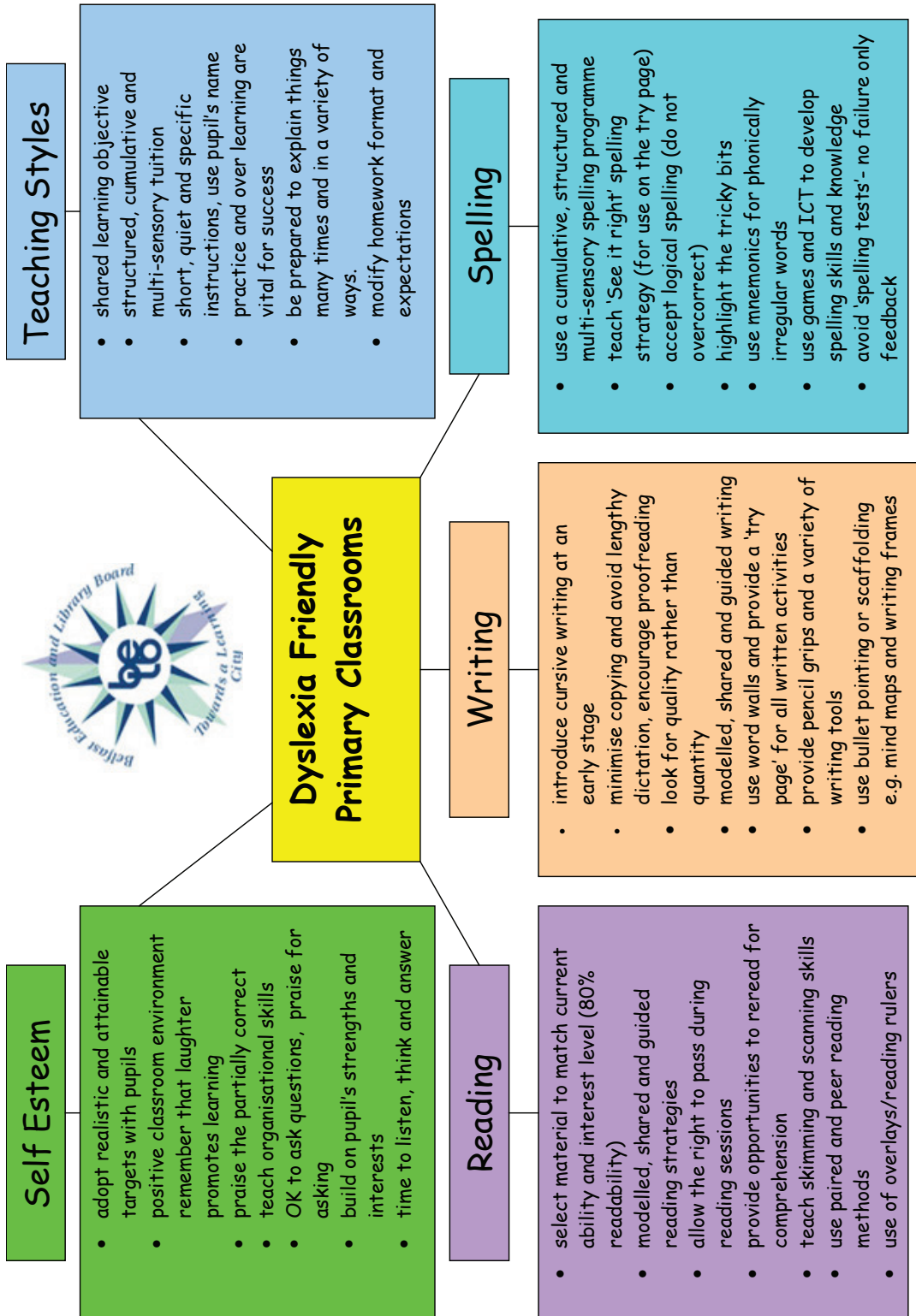
- explain things carefully and show how it is done
- give time to listen, think, answer and write
- notice if they are having difficulty and offer help
- write clearly on the board and provide printed handouts etc.
- smile when they ask a question
- try not to shout or use sarcasm
- **do not discuss their work in front of the class**

*Primary National Literacy Strategy 2004*



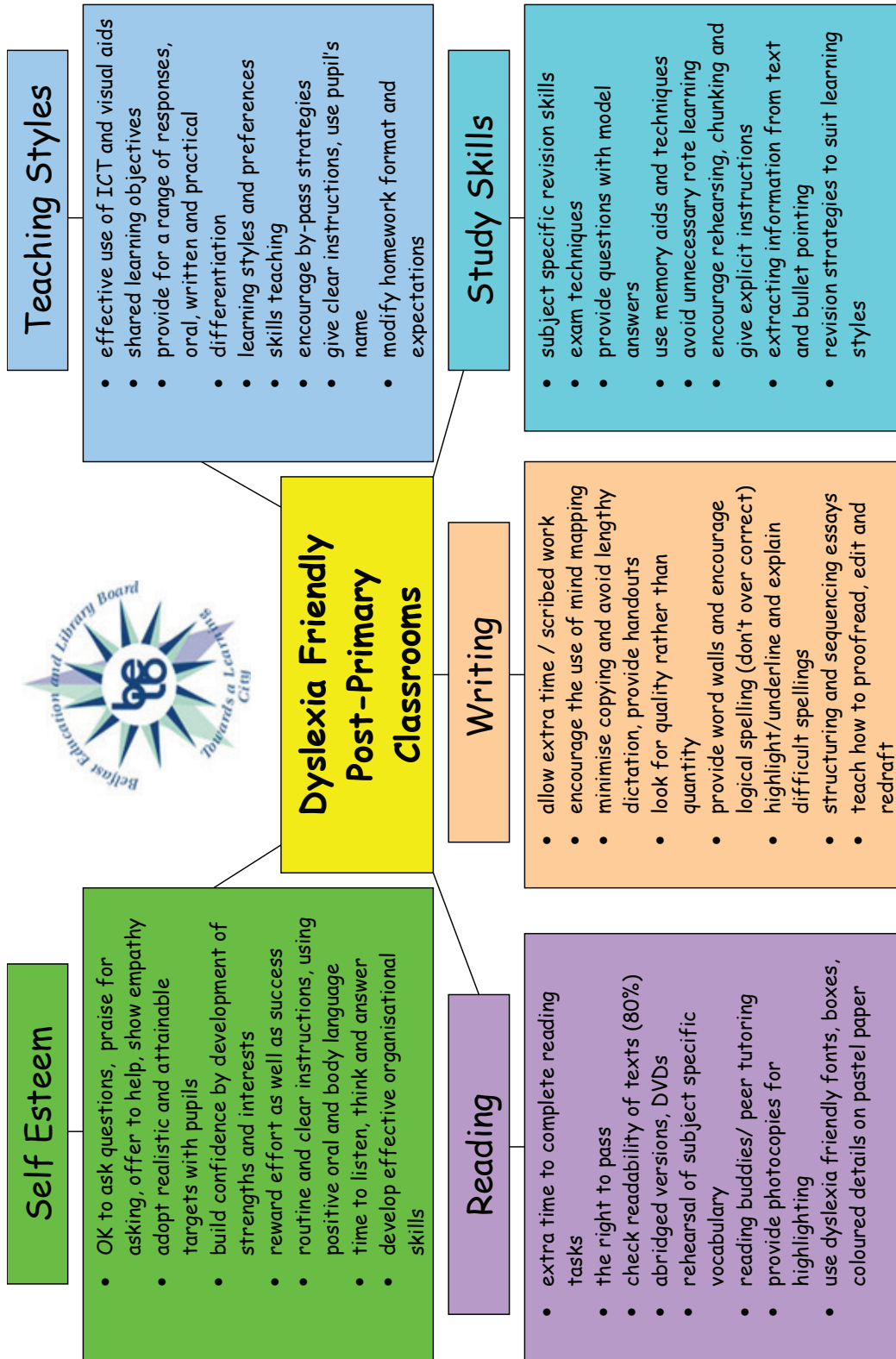


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**Dyslexia Friendly Primary Classrooms**

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# Useful Resources

Northern Ireland Task Group Report on Dyslexia (2002) available at [http://www.deni.gov.uk/parents/special ed needs/dyslexia/dyslexia.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/parents/special_ed_needs/dyslexia/dyslexia.pdf)

Developing a Dyslexia Friendly learning Environment: DE Handbook

Removing Dyslexia as a Barrier to Achievement: N Mackay: SEN Marketing (primary)

Dyslexia: Successful inclusion in the Secondary School: G Reid: David Fulton Publishers

## **Web sites:**

[www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)

[www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk)

[www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)

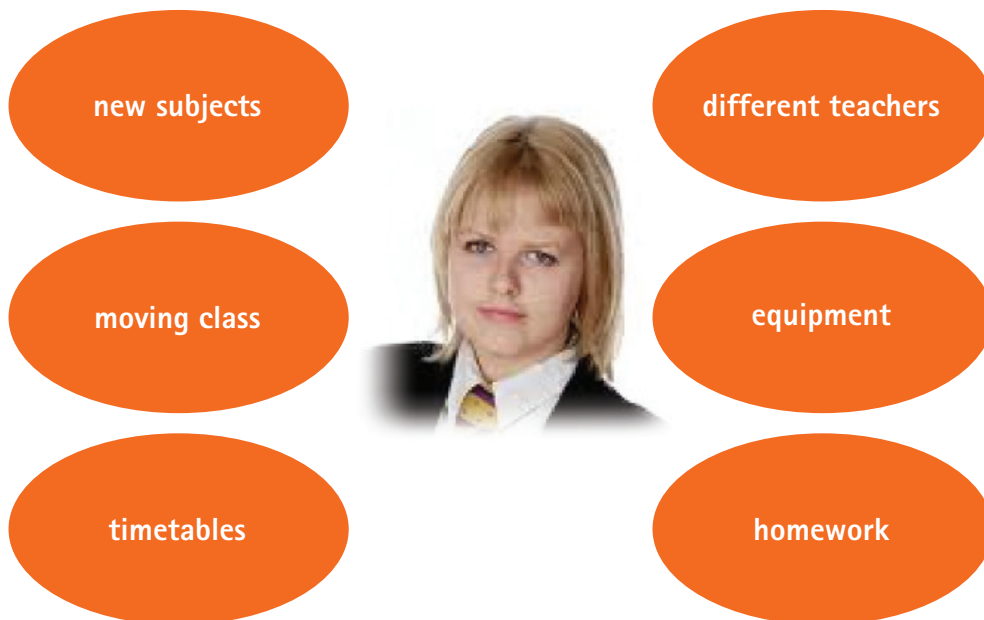
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## Transition from Primary to Post-Primary

While moving from Primary to Post-Primary school is an exciting experience for many pupils, for those with a literacy difficulty it can be a very anxious time.

### How will I cope?



Many pupils may already have received additional literacy support in their primary school, however due to persistent difficulties in acquiring literacy skills they still find the secondary curriculum difficult to access.

The key to success is to ensure that every pupil is treated as an individual. Planning must be based on assessed need and learning style, delivered through a differentiated and inclusive curriculum.

One of the key aspects of transition from Primary to Post-Primary education is that of pupils taking responsibility for their own learning. While it is essential to prepare adolescents with skills for independence, it is essential to ensure that all their needs are met.

Schools can do this by ensuring that:

- The ethos of the school is supportive and inclusive
- Routines are explained through a proactive induction process
- Subject teachers differentiate the content of their subject and present it in a dyslexia friendly way
- All staff have the sufficient knowledge and skills to plan, present and develop suitable materials
- Smart targets are set for IEPs with robust evaluation systems in place
- Individual/group support systems are in place
- Technology and multi-media are used to assist with the presentation of work and assessment
- Access arrangements are put in place for examinations  
[www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)

**Parents** are involved in all aspects of the pupil's education.

'Parents are a very rich support of information and assistance and it is important that collaboration between home and school is ongoing'

*Dyslexia and Inclusion, Gavin Reid (2005), p71*

Above all we must ensure that the pupil has a voice.

'The child should where possible according to age maturity and capability, participate in all the decision making processes which occur in education!'

*Supplement to the code of practice – pars 1.19, p6*

Acknowledgements: Mrs R Connolly NEELB, Mrs J Gordon & Mrs S Donaldson, Slemish College



## Key Indicators of Literacy difficulties in the Post Primary School

Teachers may become aware of some of the following indicators which may assist in the diagnosis of a previously unnoticed literacy difficulty.

### Reading Difficulties

- Poor Phonological Awareness (difficulties with letter sounds)
- Problems when attempting new words
- Misreading reading basic text
- Lack of reading fluency
- Limited comprehension

### Auditory / Visual Processing

- Unable to follow sequence of instructions
- Poor memory
- Difficulties copying out text /dictation

### Writing

- Frequent spelling mistakes
- Untidy handwriting
- Limited vocabulary
- Good orally but poor standard of written answers

### Organisation

- Poor presentation of work
- Difficulties organising equipment for school day
- May have problems organising and planning class work and homework

### Behaviour

- Poor concentration
- Careless
- Low self-esteem
- Clumsy / weak gross & fine motor skills

Pupils displaying several indicators may warrant further investigation and advice from Learning Support staff.

## Strategies

Below is a selection of strategies which can be used by teachers to provide an inclusive learning environment. Further resources can be found listed at the end of this section.

- Use a multi-sensory approach (VAK)
- Link previous lesson & bigger picture
- Present clear lesson outline & learning intentions
- Provide handouts to highlight/underline on an agreed colour of paper (often cream/ buff)
- Encourage use of bookmark to follow text
- Agree in advance if willing to read aloud
- Use reading buddies
- Display/provide key words
- Revise specific spelling strategies for key subject vocabulary (i.e. look-cover-write-check; split words; words in words, mnemonics, picture links)
- Provide visual reminders of sequence of tasks/instructions
- Encourage time for proof reading of work
- Allow use of computer software to assist checking of work
- Use model answers and exemplary work
- Teach and use mind-mapping techniques
- Colour code modules/topics
- Frequent reinforcement of Learning Intentions and instructions
- Praise and reward effort regularly
- Create environment of risk-taking
- Set SMART targets
- Colour code timetable
- Give clear homework instructions at agreed point during lesson.

*If they don't learn the way we teach, can we teach them the way they learn?""\**

Dr Harry T Chasty

\*Children's Difficulties in Reading, Spelling and Writing: Challenges and Responses by Peter David Pumfrey, Colin D. Elliott: Chapter 17 Pg 269 Meeting the Challenges of Specific Learning Difficulties by Dr H T Chasty


Acknowledgements: Mrs R Connolly NEELB, Mrs J Gordon & Mrs S Donaldson, Slemish College



## Our playground rules



1. Care and share.



2. Stand quietly in the line.

# The Autistic Spectrum



Department of  
**Education**

[www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)

AN ROINN  
**Oideachais**

MÁNNYSTRIE O  
**Lear**



## Introduction

Many children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are educated successfully within mainstream schools. This chapter provides examples of how to best tailor the classroom environment and educational programmes to meet individual strengths and needs for children and young people in primary and post primary schools. Some are educated in mainstream classrooms and others in specialist bases where they participate in integrated programmes as appropriate. The chapter has been written by specialist practitioners and focuses on children and young people who require a high degree of specialist intervention techniques. The strategies recommended can be adapted to meet the needs of any child or young person with ASD. It contains advice on inclusion models and intervention strategies that have been implemented successfully in schools throughout Northern Ireland. It provides information on the resources and guidance material provided by the Department of Education and the Department of Education and Skills on teaching children and young people with ASD. Information is detailed on useful commercially based resources and equipment. Direction is provided for those who wish to advance their knowledge of ASD through specialist training provided by the Education and Library Boards' ASD Advisory Teams and advanced training and intervention programmes provided by Middletown Centre for Autism. Details are also provided regarding Masters courses on ASD delivered by universities and on specialist training from other organizations. Please contact the ASD Advisory Support Teams in your Education Board area and/or Middletown Centre for Autism for more information, advice or training.

## Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) describes a group of conditions characterized by three main areas of difficulty known as the Triad of Impairments (Wing and Gould 1979). These three areas are:

- Difficulty with social interaction. This includes problems with recognising and understanding the feelings of other people and with managing their own feelings. An inability to interact with other people can make it difficult for these pupils to form friendships.
- Difficulty with social communication. Difficulties will include using and understanding verbal and non-verbal language, such as gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice.
- Difficulty with social imagination. This includes the ability to understand and predict other people's intentions and behaviour and to imagine situations outside of their own experience. This can be accompanied by a narrow repetitive range of activities. Difficulties in the area of imagination and thought are manifest by a lack of flexibility in thinking and behaving. This area of difficulty makes it challenging for pupils to cope with new and unfamiliar situations.

ASD is diagnosed by the existence of the full Triad of Impairments though the particular manifestation of the Triad will vary among individual children and young people. The degree of impairment is considered to be along a continuum of mild, moderate or severe. There are no behaviours per se that by their presence or absence indicate autistic spectrum disorder; it is the overall pattern and underlying difficulties that define ASD (Jordan et al., 1998). The incident rate is generally accepted as 1 in 100 and the male to female ratio has remained unchanged for many years at 4:1. It is important to be aware that girls in mainstream settings may present with more subtle characteristics but may need adaptations and interventions to enable a successful educational experience.

Increasingly there is acknowledgement that in addition to the Triad of Impairments, there are sensory differences experienced by those with a diagnosis of ASD. A detailed account of the nature of these differences is available in the sensory processing section.

Whilst certain areas of daily life are likely to remain a challenge for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder it is important to build on the pupil's unique strengths and learning styles. These strengths may lie in areas such as good rote memory and attention to detail, and particularly in bringing a new perspective to everyday situations.

## References

National Autistic Society (2010) ASD and Asperger's Syndrome: an introduction. Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> November 2010 from <http://www.ASD.org.uk/about-ASD/ASD-and-asperger-syndrome-an-introduction.aspx>

Jordan, R., Jones, G. & Murray, D. (1998). Evaluating Interventions for children with ASD: a literary review of recent and current research. London: DfES

Wing, L. and Gould, J. (1979) Severe impairments of social interaction and associated abnormalities in children: epidemiology and classification. Journal of ASD and Developmental Disorders, Vol. 9(1), pp. 11-29

## Important Points about Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder

- The child or young person with ASD has a different worldview. This can show others a different perspective on everyday situations and be very interesting and engaging.
- The child or young person with ASD is likely to appear to be focused on self. It may appear that only his/her needs matter to him/her.
- Children and young people with ASD will have an uneven learning profile. Intellectually able pupils may have great difficulties with adaptive living tasks involving sequencing and organization e.g. bringing the correct books to school or setting a table.
- The child or young person with ASD may seem to have little or no understanding about what other people think or feel.
- The child or young person with ASD may have sensory issues – visual, sounds, tastes, smells, textures.
- (See chapter on sensory processing).
- The child or young person with ASD may have dietary / medical issues - limited diet / problems with digestion/ problems with toileting.
- Each child or young person is unique - no 'one size fits all'. In addition to knowing about ASD it is essential to become familiar with the individual characteristics of the child or young person.





## Assessment

The assessment process will prove most useful if a pupil's strengths and needs are considered contextually. Teachers will develop a comprehensive understanding of their pupil by assessing different adaptive areas such as academic skills, learning styles (see good practice bullet point 4), how the child or young person communicates and why, and how the pupil responds to in social situations such as the dining room or playground. Just as importantly the comprehensive assessment process should lead, as required, to the implementation of targets and interventions adapted to the individual pupil. These can be recorded in a summary document such as the pupil profile and action plan detailed in Appendix 1 and 2.

1. Parental Information is an invaluable source of information and could be included in the Pupil Profile (see Appendix 1).
2. The Educational Psychology Report in the statement provides important information.
3. Multi-agency Professional Reports e.g. Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy Reports.
4. PEP-3 (Psycho-Educational Profile): an ASD specific assessment tool which provides a developmental profile of the child – generally for use up to the age of 7.
5. Transition Assessment Profile (T-Tap) An assessment tool for young people from age 14 years addressing vocational skills.
6. Social Skills Checklists (see the resource and equipment list).
7. Standardised classroom based tests if appropriate for the individual and in keeping with school policy.

8. School based observations in a variety of settings – an initial period of observation is essential in building up a profile of the child and should be continually updated.
9. Education Plan (EP) monitoring. EP's need to target the Triad of impairments in addition to academic learning. (See Appendix 2).

## Good Practice Points

1. Familiarise relevant staff with the individual child's learning style, academic levels and social skills using the results of classroom interactions and observations, (see assessment section).
2. Read and respond to the information in multi-agency reports from previous classes (see assessment section).
3. Provide opportunities for parents to work closely with the school. Use information from parents as a vital resource, (see assessment section).
4. Ensure that you are familiar with your pupil's communicative level. A verbal, intellectually able pupil may have significant difficulties with inference, creative expression, auditory processing, and comprehension, literal interpretation of events and phrases and with reciprocal conversation.
5. Attain an understanding of the pupils learning style, for example, most pupils will learn best if information is presented to them visually. Some, for example, will have difficulties getting started on a task or will finish work very quickly. Others will work at a steady pace; appear not to hear anything going on around them (perhaps even loud noises such as a fire bell). Some will not be able to leave work unfinished. All pupils are individuals and knowing how they work and learn will help teachers decide on appropriate interventions and classroom adaptations for individual children and young people.

These points have proved useful in schools, throughout Northern Ireland, delivering successful inclusion programmes for children and young people with ASD.

6. When moving from preschool to primary school or from primary to post primary school, arrange for the child or young person and their parents to visit the school close to transition time. Chose a quiet time initially for the visit, perhaps when the school is closed, and provide a 'transition resource' including photos of the teachers and classrooms, gym, playground and dining hall. For older children and young people (or for those children who are particularly interested), provide a map.



7. Create 'an autism competent' environment which is designed to reflect the learning needs, and support the inclusion of, children with an ASD" (DENI, 2005, page 4). Particular attention should be given to the following:

- i. The sensory environment (see chapter on sensory processing)

**Visual teaching methods including:**

- ii. The physical structure of the classroom (placement of desks, providing obvious boundaries for circle time or group work spaces).
- iii. The use of work systems – instructions on what work to do, how much work to do, when will the work be finished, what happens next. (see Appendix 3)
- iv. Access to an individual timetable.
- v. Procedures for dealing with change and transition throughout the day (see Appendix 3)

8. Ensure that social understanding is taught specifically (c.f. A Guide to Classroom Practice: ASD Working Group pages 13-19)
9. Assist each child to integrate at an appropriate and meaningful level with his/her peers
10. Ensure that all staff has training in ASD and are familiar with the specific interventions used with each pupil. Training should be comprehensive and ongoing (see training and advanced training sections).
11. Make specific arrangements for the child or young person at break and lunch times if necessary e.g. adult supervision, social stories, buddies for primary school pupils, peer support programmes for post primary school pupils; time in the library to use computers or do homework.
12. Traditional interventions for the promotion of challenging behaviour are likely to be ineffective as the best starting point is usually to view the behaviour from the point of view of how ASD is impacting the child or young person. The table in Appendix 5 provides more suggestions for assessing the behaviour taking ASD as the starting point and provides intervention methods to help address common issues.

See Appendix 5 for more good practice strategies.

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These strategies will all contribute to reducing the child's anxiety; however the child or young person's emotional needs will need to be monitored throughout the day and appropriate responses made to help ensure their well being.

## SPECIALIST SETTING IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Background Information

This model is from an ASD specific class within a mainstream primary school for Foundation and Key Stage 1 pupils who have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder.

The pupils are taught for most of the school day in a small class with a maximum of 8 pupils to one teacher and two classroom assistants. The ages range from 4 to 8 years old and the staff are trained in a range of approaches which include TEACCH, PECs, ABA, (refer to Training Section for an explanation of terms), ASD Advisory Education and Library Board INSET training including, sensory diets, interactive play and social stories to name. An eclectic mix of teaching strategies proves most successful; there is no 'one size fits all' methodology.

**The class is an integral part of the school it is not viewed as a unit or school within a school.**

### Integration Methods

Each pupil is integrated with a class in his/her year group or the year below, where appropriate. They may integrate for assemblies, school trips, dinnertime and in the playground – often for a short period of time with a high level of support initially, then gradually increasing the time spent and reducing the level of support, at a pace dictated by the child's needs. They may also integrate for curricular subjects, usually in an area of relative strength for the child, again usually with the support of a classroom assistant for as long as is necessary.

Those children who are ready may well progress to spending a considerable portion of the day with the mainstream class, touching base with the ASD class as necessary. On occasion he/she may need help organising the day, therefore a timetable will need to be provided or calming strategies, for example, according

to need. Close liaison between the specialist ASD teacher and mainstream teacher will obviously be essential to success. Integration works on a number of different levels:

**Reverse integration** – where a small group of mainstream pupils join the ASD class, this usually works well as an initial form of integration as the pupils do not have to cope with a new setting as well as new people

**Whole group integration** – into another class, with support from the specialist teacher and a classroom assistant

**Small group integration** – into another class with support from a classroom assistant

**Individual integration** – into another class with support from a classroom assistant

**Individual integration** – into another class without support.

Having the same child for a period of up to four years builds up a close relationship between staff and pupil. The staff must be extremely sensitive to each child's needs and moods, likes and dislikes as even the most vocal of our children can have great difficulty communicating what they think or feel.

## **Outcomes**

**Progress is regularly monitored through Education Plan (EP) targets, checklists (see Appendix 3) and data collection when required.**

At the end of Key Stage 1 a transfer review is held and all those with a professional interest in the child attend or submit advice. A decision is then made as to the child's next placement; there are three main paths that pupils

follow. For some, the best placement is within the special school setting; others often move on to a learning support class where they can benefit from a small group setting while continuing to integrate with their mainstream peers; while a third group will progress to mainstream (with or without the support of a classroom assistant). Whichever route the child takes, the transition process will be carefully planned and the child gradually familiarised with his new setting. This will often take months to complete, but ensures support for the family and the least stressful move for the child.

### **The Classroom Environment**

The ASD classes provide the child with a structured environment that addresses their individual needs. The layout and tone of the classroom is one of the most important tools for helping children with ASD understand expectations, and access the curriculum. It also has proven to have a significant impact on promoting positive behaviour. Thought needs to be given to the layout of the classroom. The physical environment may need to be more structured (visual skills are an area of relative strength for many of our pupils) with clearly defined areas for different activities. Physical boundaries using cupboards and bookcases can be very helpful when placed strategically in a classroom to define areas.

The areas may include:

- 1:1 teaching area
- Workstation (enclosed cubicle for independent work) or work desk
- transition area (schedules and timetables are located in a specific area)
- snack area
- area for group work and group activities



- story/ roll call/T.V. area
- computer
- play area
- cloakroom/ area for changing for P.E.
- Library
- waiting area

As the pupils will often have an 'obsession' with computers, toys or T.V. it is very helpful if these distractions can be kept well away from work and teaching areas. However they should be timetabled into a part of the school day so the pupil can see that he/she will be given time to engage in areas of high interest to him/her.

## Classroom Layout

These photographs are from a school in the SELB



Teaching at a table  
for new work or work the  
pupil may need help with.

Story /TV /roll call

Group work /  
Snack time



Independent work with  
removable screens

Table top activities

Cloakroom



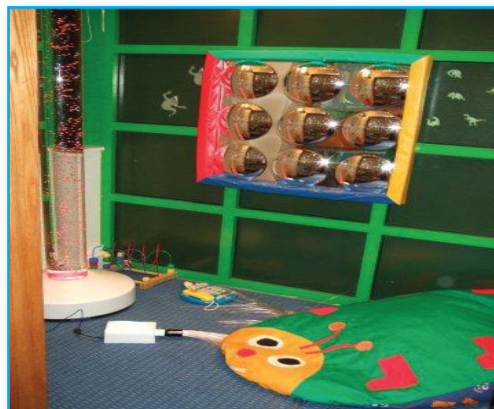
Cloakroom

Changing for PE

Waiting /  
Transition Area

## **The Quiet/Calm Corner**

The quiet corner or sensory area (pictured below) is used as a 'chill out' area for those occasions when the impact of anxiety, frustration or anger becomes unmanageable. On occasion some pupils will need to access an area entirely free from distractions or sensory input, at other times they may need sensory input (e.g. movement or deep pressure) from items such as therapy balls or tactile toys or weighted blankets. Many pupils with ASD lose their ability to communicate clearly when they are anxious or upset, the quiet corner is therefore an invaluable resource – they soon understand that it is a safe place not a punishment and that no issues will be addressed until they are calm enough respond. They often ask to go to the quiet corner when just getting anxious or upset as it tends to have a calming effect and promotes positive behaviour.



## **Timetables**

Timetables help the pupil to understand the activities that will happen in the school day and can be used to help pupils cope with changes. The teacher can show the pupil what was planned to happen and what will happen instead. This reduces anxiety and promotes learning. We all use diaries, outlook calendars and mobile phones as organizational tools. The premise for children with ASD is the same and most pupils will benefit greatly from having access to a schedule individualized to their needs.

A variety of daily schedules/ timetables are tailored to the individual pupil's level of understanding, these may include:

- object/tobi (true object based icon, an actual object is scanned and true to size on the schedule) – usually an object associated with the activity; e.g. a pencil for work, a cup for snack;
- large line drawing with small word;
- what's next?...time for.....;
- small line drawing with large word (for beginning readers);
- word only (for better readers);
- weekly timetable;
- written class timetable.

## An Example of Individualized Timetables in a Classroom



Some pupils may need a transition object or card to bring them to the transition area to check their timetable. They may then need to bring the object or picture on their schedule and match it to an identical one in the area where the activity will take place. Some pupils will only cope with one or two activities on their schedule at a time; others can have part-day or whole day schedules. A system for highlighting changes to the schedule also needs to be introduced to the pupil.

### Planning

A prolonged period of assessment, (see assessment section) together with information contained in the child's Statement of Special Educational Needs, the pupil profile, parental advice, advice from other professionals and classroom observations assist in the construction of the Education Plan, which includes targets addressing the Triad of Impairments, (see the description of ASD) as

manifested in the individual child. Teachers usually arrange meetings with parents to discuss the child's Education Plan, for Annual Reviews and for Parent/Teacher evenings. Parents are encouraged to contact us at any time if they have any concerns. Teachers also attend case conferences or medical consultations where this is helpful and may also have input from other professionals involved with the child such as Speech and Language Therapists or Occupational therapists.

The child must have access to the full curriculum unless stated otherwise on his statement; however the pace and content need to be tailored to take account of any learning difficulties, and adaptations.

One of the most useful planning strategies often used is a 'home/school book' which facilitates constant communication with parents. The teacher lets the parents know what activities the pupil has participated in that day, if they have eaten well or not, any news, homework and general information about the child. The parents then sign it and write a comment, letting school know any news or information such as how the child has slept. Letters or forms that have to be sent home are put in to the Home/school book so that they do not lie forgotten in the bottom of a schoolbag. Parents can also use the Home/school book to request a meeting or a phone call and teachers can use it to forewarn of forthcoming changes or events.

## Visual Resources

Other strategies used include social stories, calming music, choices charts, desktop reminders (take turns to talk), emergency cards (I need help/ get out of class card), visual cues (quiet, hands down, no hitting), reward charts with strong motivators, turn-taking boards and whole school strategies such as merits for good behaviour, pupil of the week recognition, building up to a tangible reward such as a small toy or a packet of crayons. Individual pupils may require additional reminders e.g. volume control visual card if they are inclined to shout/ whisper. Schedules, books, and chairs may all need to be colour coded to enable non-readers to identify their space and belongings. Cues such as

footprints to show where to line up can make all the difference, and a coloured circle is easily transported to another setting when integrating.

### **Continued Professional Development**

Support for the staff comes from a number of places. The Education and Library Board (ELB) ASD services are a tremendous help – a specialist advisor can visit the school regularly to support teachers and individual pupils. They may also offer home support in some ELB's. They also facilitate cluster groups which offer the opportunity for teachers to discuss issues together. It is important that the class is an integral part of the school; both staff and pupils will benefit from the whole school training on ASD Awareness from the ELB's ASD Services and then, when teachers have experience of teaching children with ASD, from the Middletown Centre for Autism training programme.

Working with these pupils is undoubtedly a challenge, but also an immense privilege and incredibly rewarding.

## **SPECIALIST SETTING IN A POST PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Background Information**

The Communication Resource Centre (CRC) is a post primary provision for pupils with an autistic spectrum disorder who require a significant level of support in order to attend a mainstream school.

It was decided to adopt a flexible model that would combine a 'homeroom' setting for small group teaching with integration into mainstream classes. Currently the provision has 26 pupils, 4 Homerooms, 3 full-time teachers, a part-time teacher and 6 classroom assistants.

### **Integration Methods**

Each group is integrated with a class in its year group, usually the low ability class. Although many of the pupils are high functioning and academically competent, the low ability class is the most appropriate, as the pace is a little slower and the class size a little smaller than other classes. They integrate with this class during Key Stage 3. All classes in the year group follow the same curriculum content and the Centre teachers liaise with the mainstream teachers to ensure that they are working at much the same pace. As far as possible, pupils attending the CRC sit the same tests at Christmas and June as the rest of the integrated class, though they may do so in the Homeroom with some support.

The group follows the timetable of the class with which they are integrated and this allows us to operate a very flexible arrangement. Pupils who make good progress in the small groups and who are comfortable enough socially, can easily move into the mainstream class but can also have the option of moving back into the small group if necessary.



Integration works on a number of different levels:

- Whole group integration into another class, with support from the specialist teacher and a classroom assistant.
- Whole group integration into another class with support from a classroom assistant.
- Individual integration into another class with support from a teacher or a classroom assistant.
- Individual integration into another class without support.



Each Homeroom is equipped with enough single desks for the group using it, hangers for coats and PE bags, a Quiet Corner with soft seats and a TV/DVD player, and some computer stations. The Homeroom serves as a base for the pupils' entire day and is open from about 8.30 am. They go to the Homeroom as soon as they arrive in school and all of their belongings are kept in the Homeroom, thus avoiding the hustle and bustle of a locker area. The Homeroom is also open and supervised during break and lunchtime and the pupils are free to bring hand held games consoles or computer games for these periods. There are also board games and books available. The pupils are encouraged to invite friends to join them at break and lunch time so that their social skills can be improved. The Homerooms have proved so popular that they sometimes require a rota for visiting.

As part of our focus on improving social skills, we have arranged some extracurricular activities – a Friendship Group was tried during the first year but we felt it was too artificial and didn't continue it; various outings took place – to agricultural shows, to museums and science based exhibitions, historic places of interest, a castle, to a local cross community project; the school leavers and classroom assistants who have worked with them were treated to a meal at the end of the year; a senior school residential weekend was organised. These 'real life' situations worked much better than the friendship group.

*Please see Appendix 4 for a diagram on the integration process.*

## Visual Resources

A colour coded timetable for the day is clearly pinned to the board and any additional arrangements are written beside it. At the beginning of the year, each pupil is given a colour coded, laminated weekly timetable which fits into a blazer pocket and a similar one is sent home to parents to help with organising the school bag for each day. As far as possible, subject textbooks and exercise books are colour coded to match the timetables.

Other strategies used in the Centre include social stories, calming music, choices charts (tokens for making good choices), desktop reminders (take turns to talk), emergency cards (I need to go to the Homeroom now!), classroom posters (keep everyone inside the circle) and whole school strategies such as merits for good behaviour, resulting in off-homework cards. One of the Year 8 pupils this year requires a visual timetable and an individual daily schedule book. His teacher has tried to encourage a more positive attitude to school by keeping a daily Achievement Book and a book of 'Things to remember and Think About'.

We also on occasion make an arrangement with parents to offer rewards for a certain number of merits or full charts of stars – these can range from bars of chocolate to new games for the hand held games consoles. Most pupils respond to 'making deals' (you work at coursework for an hour, then you can play a computer game).

## Planning

One of the useful strategies used in the Centre is a Home/school book which facilitates constant communication with parents. The teacher makes a comment each day and the parents either sign it or write a comment as well. Letters or forms that have to be sent home are put in to the Home/school book so that they don't lie forgotten in the bottom of a schoolbag. Parents can also use the Home/school book to request a meeting or a phone call and teachers can use it to forewarn of forthcoming changes or events.

Teachers usually arrange meetings with parents after the Christmas and June examinations, for Annual Reviews and for Year Group consultations. We encourage parents to contact us at any time if they have any concerns. Teachers also attend case conferences or medical consultations where this is helpful and may also suggest referrals to the school counselling service, bereavement services or behavioural outreach services as required.

At the beginning of each year, each Centre teacher decides which subjects she will teach to the small group (anything from 3 – 5 subjects), to which she will accompany the class and where she will provide one-to-one support (perhaps literacy or numeracy support). This is a fairly straightforward exercise in Key Stage 3, when working with one year group, but is rather more difficult if two year groups have been combined or at Key Stage 4.

By Key Stage 4, the pupils are usually well settled in the school and are known and understood by most of the mainstream teachers so many of them are capable of attending mainstream classes on their own. The level of need dictates the support given at this stage. Most pupils require support from the teacher or classroom assistant in some subjects but not all, but occasionally a pupil will require full time support and as far as possible, this is put in place.

Some of the pupils are taken out of an entire option block and support periods are put in place in the Homeroom so that help can be given with coursework or revision for tests and examinations. The teachers and classroom assistants liaise with mainstream subject teachers to ensure that the pupils keep abreast of the work being done in class. When sitting GCSE examinations, access arrangements

are made as required – most Centre candidates receive 25% extra time and are allowed to sit their examinations in one of the Homerooms. Others may require a reader, prompter or a scribe. This helps to reduce some of the anxiety at examination times.

### **Environmental Adaptations**

The quiet corner in each room acts as a socialising area during break or lunch times but is also used as a chill out area for those occasions when anxiety or frustration or anger become unmanageable, or as a sick bay when a pupil is not feeling well. It is also used for Circle time or silent reading periods or for watching video clips related to what they are being taught. Many pupils with ASD lose their ability to communicate clearly when they are anxious or upset, the quiet corner is therefore an invaluable resource – they soon understand that it is a safe place not a punishment and that no issues will be addressed until they are calm enough respond. They often ask to go to the quiet corner when just getting anxious or upset as it tends to have a calming effect and promotes positive behaviour.

### **Outcomes**

So far, all Centre pupils have been able to sit at least 5 GCSE subjects and some have done very well, achieving 4 or more subjects at a C grade or above. Recent Year 12 pupils achieved some A grades and at least two of them have moved on to A-level courses next year. Most other pupils attend courses at Regional Colleges in their area. The Centre has been very successful – it works. There are two main reasons for its success – the use of a flexible model and the acknowledgement on the part of all who work in it that each child who has ASD is unique – the secret of working with them is to get to know them.

### **Continued Professional Development**

It is important that the class is an integral part of the school; both staff and pupils will benefit from the whole school training on ASD Awareness from the

ELB's ASD Services and then, when teachers have some experience of teaching children with ASD, from the Blended Approaches to Intervention training delivered by Middletown Centre for Autism (MCA).

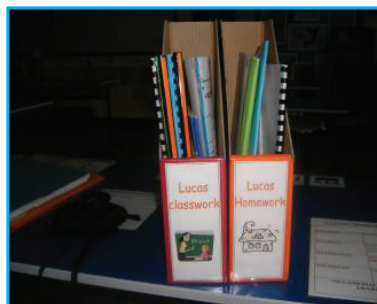
Support for the staff comes from a number of places. The Education and Library Board (ELB) ASD services are a tremendous help – a specialist adviser can visit the school regularly to support teachers and individual pupils. They may also offer home support in some ELB's. They can provide whole school training which facilitates integration. They also facilitate cluster groups which offer the opportunity for teachers to discuss issues together. There are various free training courses that schools have access to on an ongoing basis, sometimes ELB based, other times through the Centre for ASD based at Middletown, Co Armagh.

## MAINSTREAM CLASSROOMS

Some children and young people will need less intensive support than others. At times small adjustments to the organisation or layout of the classroom and additional support during times the pupil finds particularly difficult, may be enough to facilitate a successful school experience for the child or young person with ASD. The following are examples of adaptable strategies easily incorporated in a mainstream classroom. The same principles of intervention will apply as those described in the 'Specialist Setting' sections, but these can be adapted to fit individual need. Teachers can, through assessment, decide what interventions are needed and when they can be reduced. It is not usually recommended that additional strategies be removed completely unless the child or young person has internalised them and can apply what they have learned in varied settings. Teachers often find that some of these strategies help with other children or young people in their class/classes.

### Intervention Strategies in Mainstream Classrooms

These images are from the SEELB Advisory Team



Book Organisation



Not Computer Time

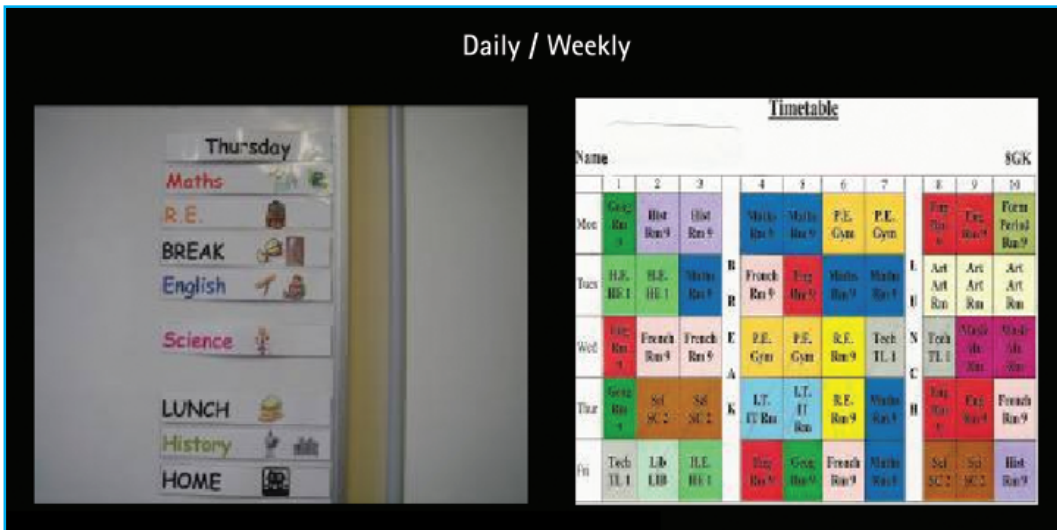


Where to stand for A PE Activity



A Moveable Carrel

**Individualised timetables**



## Books and Articles to Consider

Breakley, C. and Hesmondhalgh, M., *Access and Inclusion for Children with ASD Spectrum Disorders*. (2001). London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Christie, P. and Fidler, R. (2001) A Continuum of Provision for a Continuum of Need: Opportunities for Mainstream Integration and Inclusion Provided by a Special School for Children with ASD. *Good ASD Practice Journal*. 2. 1. p. 36.

Jordan, R. and Peeters, T., (1999) What Makes a Good Practitioner in the Field of ASD? In: G. Jones (Ed) *Good ASD Practice*. Birmingham: The University of Birmingham. p. 23.

### Resources and Equipment

- Autistic Spectrum Disorders: A Guide to Classroom Practice (booklet and "Teachers Toolkit" DVD) by the ASD Working Group. Evaluating Provision for Autistic Spectrum Disorders in Schools (2005) pb. Dept. of Education.
- Report of the Task Group on ASD pb. Dept of Education (ch.3).
- Good Practice Guidelines (for Schools to meet the Special Educational Needs of Pupils at the School Based Stages of the Code of Practice (ch. 3) pb. Education and Library Boards.
- Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network NHS (2007) Assessment, diagnosis and clinical interventions for children and young people with ASD spectrum disorders. A national clinical guideline. [On-line]: UK Available <http://www.sign.ac.uk/pdf/sign98.pdf>. Last accessed 04/11/2010.
- Boardmaker Software: an adaptable piece of software to create, schedules, super symbols, social stories, cues and reminders.



- Writing with Symbols Software: also used to create visual supports. The programme allows for the creation of sentences with symbols.
- Clicker 5.
- Computer.
- Laminator.
- Velcro.
- Timers.
- Quiet area with few distractions.
- OT equipment as recommended e.g. 'move n' sit' cushion, peanut roll, scooter board (see sensory chapter).
- Home/school diary – two way daily information communication system.
- Mini white boards – allow for repeated practice of fine motor skills, easy correction of errors, individual work for copying into books, communicating with the child in a visual manner.
- Quest – a useful diagnostic tool for Key Stage 1 pupils in Literacy and Numeracy.
- Talkabout Series – Alex Kelly A Social Skills Teaching Resource.
- Educational Games - [www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise](http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise).
- Aarons and Gittens Social Skills Assessment.
- Board Games e.g. Monopoly, Cranium, Pictionary.

- Alphasmart computers (for pupils with writing difficulties).
- Beat Dyslexia (for children who have specific literacy difficulties).

### **Training Opportunities**

ASD Training Programmes provided by each Education and Library Board including:

- 2-day INSET for Primary Schools - An Overview of Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- Applied Behavioural Analysis - Supporting the child with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder using the principles of Applied Behavioural Analysis.
- Boardmaker - Computer Programme Training.
- Writing With Symbols - Computer Programme Training.
- Whole School Training on Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

Visually Based Communication Training including:

- Hanen Programme for teachers.
- Picture Exchange Communication (PECS).
- Elklan Programme.

ASD Specific Intervention Training including:

- SCERTS (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transitional Support).

- TEACCH (Training and Education of Autistic and related Communication Handicapped Children and Adults).
- Promotion of Positive Behaviour in the Classroom setting including the principles of applied behavior analysis e.g. IABA Training (International Applied Behaviour Analysis).

Social Skills Training including training by:

- ELB ASD Advisory Teams.

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*These training courses are not specifically aimed at a particular age, ability level or school setting (unless the title provides specific information). The principles learned can be adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils.*

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## Useful Websites for Schools

### Good Practice Guidance

- [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk) Department of Education in Northern Ireland website from which many of the booklets and resources can be downloaded.
- <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/165037> - free DVD Inclusion Development Programme Primary & Secondary- Supporting Pupils on the ASD Spectrum.
- [http://www.rcslt.org/speech\\_and\\_language\\_therapy/commissioning/resource\\_manual\\_for\\_commissioning\\_and\\_planning\\_services](http://www.rcslt.org/speech_and_language_therapy/commissioning/resource_manual_for_commissioning_and_planning_services) Royal College of Speech and Language Therapy Website provides useful information on ASD and helpful framework suggestions for commissioning and planning resources.
- [www.learningni.org](http://www.learningni.org) Learning NI website.

### Visual Resources

- <http://www.twinkl.co.uk> Twinkl Website - Early Years and KS1 teaching resources.
- Topmarks Website - Teaching resources, interactive resources, including Special Needs Link. <http://www.topmarks.co.uk>
- [http://directories.phillipmartin.info/home\\_school.htm](http://directories.phillipmartin.info/home_school.htm) Phillip Martin Copyright free clipart for use in the classroom.
- <http://www.ASDeducationtrust.org.uk/resources/tools%20for%20teachers.aspx> ASD Education Trust Teacher tools which contain comprehensive examples of visuals.

### Social Stories

- [www.thegraycenter.org](http://www.thegraycenter.org) Carol Gray - social stories resources by Carol Gray.
- <http://www.kansasasd.com/node/9> social stories for specific age groups and interests.
- [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_4479088\\_write-social-stories-children-ASD.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_4479088_write-social-stories-children-ASD.html) How to write a social story.
- [www.sandbox-learning.com](http://www.sandbox-learning.com) Sandbox Learning is dedicated to developing fun and engaging stories that help those with ASD. Materials can be purchased online.

### Communication and Social Skills

- <http://www.cccoe.net/social/skillslist.htm> Lesson Plans for the teaching of social skills ASD specific resources.
- <http://www.do2learn.com> Do2Learn Games, songs, communication cards, print resources and information for special needs.
- [www.communication4all.co.uk](http://www.communication4all.co.uk) Communication Resources. Classroom resources to support children with SEN. The site has a large range of print and interactive materials supporting several curriculum areas.
- [www.speechmark.net](http://www.speechmark.net) Speech Mark Speech and language resources.
- [www.senteacher.org](http://www.senteacher.org) SEN Teacher Behaviour charts, certificates, emotion cards.

### Voluntary Organisations

- [www.nas.org.uk](http://www.nas.org.uk) National Autistic Society - "We are the leading UK charity for people with ASD (including Asperger's Syndrome) and their families. We provide information, support and pioneering services, and campaign for a better world for people with ASD."
- [www.ASD.ie](http://www.ASD.ie) Irish Society for ASD.
- [www.ASDni.org](http://www.ASDni.org) ASD NI - seeks to ensure that people with ASD and their carers have access to appropriate services, enabling people with ASD to be valued members of the community.
- <http://www.ASDeducationtrust.org.uk> The ASD Education Trust (AET) is dedicated to co-coordinating and improving education support for all children on the autistic spectrum. The site features a number of resources for students and teachers, including: tools for teachers supporting pupils with ASD.

### **Advanced Topics in Autistic Spectrum Disorder**

Each child and young person is different and will have differing strengths and needs throughout their lives. External factors often play a significant part in their wellbeing. Some are highly influenced by others whom they perceive to be their friends but who are actually playing on their vulnerability. Internal factors also have an influence on their development and progress. Commonly, pupils experience an increase in their anxiety or/and an awareness of their differences as they reach puberty. In addition, an increasing number of pupils present with a complex range of strengths and challenges. Children and young people may have a diagnosis encompassing ASD and a number of co-existing conditions such as, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD). Additional intervention techniques and medications may be required to address these issues. Kutscher (2007) advises that when we are presented with children with comorbidities and ASD we get to know the child in detail to tailor appropriate interventions based on their strengths and

addressing their needs. Many of the strategies useful for children and young people with ASD will be useful for those with ASD and co-existing conditions as the case studies and table below indicate.

## Reference

Kutscher M. Kids in the Syndrome Mix C. and Hesmondhalgh. (2005). London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

The following describes a primary aged child and a post primary young person with complex challenges and provides good practice points.

## Primary Case Study

### Kate

Kate is eight years old and is in a mainstream school with four 25 other pupils, two classroom assistants and a teacher. Kate has a diagnosis of ASD and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Kate loves drawing and working with art materials to create models of bridges, she has expressed ambitions of becoming an architect.

Kate has one close friend in the class with whom she enjoys contact with out of school, however it is reported that she is becoming 'obsessed' with this child. The teacher has noted that Kate monopolizes her friends time and the child's mother has asked that Kate be seated elsewhere. Kate finds it difficult to establish and maintain other friendships as she likes to be in control and when other children recognise this they disengage from the interaction and can tease her. Kate's teacher and parents feel that this is having a negative impact on her self-esteem to the point where she appears to be trying less and less to participate in positive social interaction instead engaging in throwing chairs, hitting out at other children and generally being disruptive in school. This maintains the cycle of problem behaviour, reprimands and hinders her academic progress.

Kate has very articulate verbal communication and is able to partake in group discussions usually when they are based around her special interests. She commonly brings conversation around to her special interests (buildings, art, bridges) and does not cope well with interruptions during the flow of these conversations/monologues.

It is difficult for Kate to remain in her seat for periods over three minutes and she cannot stay on task during the teaching of subjects in which she has no particular interest.

The teacher has tried to teach Kate appropriate friendship rules and extend her conversation skills through circle time activities however, Kate finds it difficult



to wait her turn, interrupts others and runs off so these sessions have had to be abandoned.

During writing tasks, Kate finds it difficult to frame her ideas to a coherent piece of work. This results in frustration and books are often thrown at other children and the teacher.

While Kate is in the top group academically within her class, she is failing to achieve because she cannot control her impulses.

### Good Practice Points

- Kate could respond well to a visual timetable to help her remain on task with scheduled movement breaks sandwiched between preferred and non preferred activities to ensure her motivation levels remain high. This will address her ASD and ADHD profile.
- Kate needs to be taught explicitly about friendship skills in a small group. This should begin with Kate working with a classroom assistant or teacher, before working with emotionally able classmates. Teachers should consider using a range of vehicles including role-play and video modeling to engage her attention.
- Create a buddy system where Kate has a pre-assigned peer that she can turn to for help, it is important that this responsibility rotates throughout the class.
- Use PDMU to address teasing and bullying within the whole class with the aim of instilling a respectful ethos.
- Have a quiet work area that Kate can go to which is free from distractions and placed away from busy areas including windows and doors.
- Teach Kate how to use a writing frame to organise her thoughts and allow her to present her material in different ways including PowerPoint, photographs and video.

## Post Primary Case Study

### Graham

Graham is 15 years old and has a diagnosis of ASD and ODD. He is academically able but teachers believe that his behaviour outbursts affect his overall academic performance. In particular Graham will argue with his French and Science teachers often about what he sees as specific inaccuracies in grammar or fact. However Graham has a few friends and teachers generally enjoy having him in class despite the challenges he presents as he has a very interesting interpretation of everyday situations is usually right and is endlessly interesting. He has a number of topics he is specifically interested in including football league tables and train timetables.

Graham is very loyal to his friends but recently some have taken advantage of his tendency to be argumentative and have encouraged him to come into conflict with teachers, as it is a distraction to the class. His parents have asked the school to help with this situation.

He is becoming more extroverted and displaying increased sensitivity to the school environment, for example he persistently shouts out inappropriately at the beginning of class saying random phrases such as 'turn it off' or lines from current films. He says that the lights are hurting him as they are flickering and too bright.

He has started to react badly to any direction in certain classes for example in PE Graham is refusing to get involved and last week he threatened the PE teacher and said that he was going to harm himself if he was forced to participate.

He says that school makes him sick and that he cannot cope with the other children in his class; and he pushed another boy in the back last week for bumping into him in the corridor. His temper is starting to get the better of him and it is a matter of time before he gets into serious trouble.

His Science Teacher saw him talking to himself and she is worried that he might be hearing voices.

His mother reported that he has become even more defiant at home and she found him under the mattress of his bed last week when it was time to get up for school.

### **Good Practice Points**

- Teachers and parents might try to avoid getting into arguments with Graham and should try to redirect his attention to one of his many interests.
- Check what Graham is saying when he appears to talk to himself, it may be a self regulation technique however, consider a referral to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) if you are very concerned.
- To extend his friendship circles the school could consider peer mentoring with students who would set good examples for Graham.
- Talk to Graham's parents and Graham about the pros and cons of disclosing his diagnoses to his peers. This may help them be more understanding and accepting.
- Consider establishing self-advocacy groups to teach Graham about appropriate behaviour and how to react to others.
- Gain Graham's parents' permission to video his shouting out behaviour and play it back to him. Sometimes pupils are unaware of the effect their behaviour has on others and seeing it can provide this insight.
- Provide written rules in a positive form. Write a few points about what behaviour would be more appropriate for example, 'please whisper' rather than 'do not shout'.
- Give Graham warning of what will happen in PE. Ensure he has a specific activity to engage in or have him do the same activity as the whole class but with the teacher or an understanding pupil.
- Consider having Graham 'dis-apply' for PE if it is becoming a further problem. Reassess the issue regularly.

- If he is refusing to come to school consider a reduced timetable for a short period of time. This arrangement should be regularly reviewed.
- Turn the lights in the classroom off or move Graham's chair so he does not sit near the light fittings.
- Teach Graham less extreme ways of opting out. For example the use of a 'get out of class card.'

## Intervention Strategies for Children and Young People with Co-Existing Diagnoses

### ASD and ODD

Children with ASD and ODD, often have difficulty understanding how they appear to other people and as a result, do not perceive themselves as being argumentative or difficult and will blame their problems on others. Such children can also be perfectionists and have a skewed sense of justice regarding violations of what they consider correct behaviour.

Children with ODD and ASD often start arguments and will not give up. Winning the argument is of very high importance to the child and this will be more important than the actual content of the argument. Even knowing that they will receive a sanction for continuing the tantrum or argument will be of little significance as they will have difficulty ending the confrontation. Attempting to reason with such a child often rebounds because the child perceives rational discussion as a continuation of the argument. For this reason it is important not to engage in the argument process and avert the potential for such conflicts by pre-empting which situations are likely to give rise for an argument.

It is critical not to take what the child says personally oppositional behaviour is the symptom of the disorder not a personal attack.

Utilizing effective consequences for the oppositional child can be difficult since this presents one more opportunity for conflict in which you are likely to lose

Rules and consequences must be clear, and in writing to provide clarity for both child and teacher before the conflict occurs

Be aware that constant conflict is likely to have a negative impact on the child's self esteem. Therefore, staff should ensure there are many opportunities for this child to engage in appropriate activities.

Reward all instances of cooperative behaviour.

Refrain from arguing with children and make it clear that they will not be engaged in confrontational displays.

There are often ranges of challenging behaviours present in ODD so decide which behaviour you will target for intervention and which you are going to ignore. This way you will be more likely to experience some success and build on it.

### ASD and ADHD

There are similarities between ASD and ADHD in that both have difficulty in executive function, turn taking and excessive talking and interrupting (Ozonoff, 2008). Children and young people with ADHD will have hyperactivity, which may be absent in a child with an ASD diagnosis.

Alternate seated activities with those that involve movement so that the child has many opportunities to move throughout the day.

Where appropriate give the child or young person specific responsibilities around school, for example, giving out materials or running errands.

Provide a stress ball, small toy, or other object for the child to squeeze or play with discreetly at his or her seat.

Use mnemonics to aid memory.

Children may need frequent movements breaks during sedentary work.

Use a simple schedule so that the child can understand salient information without being overloaded.

Change rewards frequently. Kids with ADD/ADHD get bored if the reward is always the same.

Try to use Reward privileges, praise, or activities as rewards rather than with food.

Perhaps include some "buffer time" between break time and the next lesson which may involve following a relaxation programme so that the child can transition more easily between active and sedentary activities.

Use role play to teach child more effective ways of dealing with impulsivity

Written plans, goals, and contracts work well. A visual reminder can really make all of the difference in the world.

Give the child important jobs to do within the classroom or school as appropriate to help with self-esteem.

Try not to seat children in high traffic areas e.g. near windows and doors where they are likely to be distracted.

Have specific locations for all materials (pencil pouches, tabs in notebooks, etc.) to minimize time spent looking for items and address organizational issues.

<p>ASD and ADHD (continued)</p>	<p>Try using contingency contracts, where staff and children are encouraged to work in partnership to establish rules, self management strategies and rewards.</p> <p>Eliminate or reduce frequency of timed tests. Tests that are timed may not allow children with ADHD to demonstrate what they truly know due to their potential preoccupation with elapsed time.</p> <p>Use assistive technology programmes to help students organise their thoughts when doing extended pieces of work.</p>
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## ASD and its Impact on Behaviour

Difficulties with Social Communication	
Difficulty obeying more than one instruction at a time.	Give instructions one at a time, directly to a child or young person, or write them down in a list.
May seem not to be listening because they aren't looking at you	Don't insist on eye contact - it is very uncomfortable for many children and young people with ASD.  Check the instructions have been understood.
May seem to answer rudely - tell it like it is	Understand that their abrupt, blunt manner is not necessarily rudeness - often it is just their way of stating the truth. Use social stories to explain alternative ways of communicating.
Usually tell the truth - don't spare the feelings of others	Don't be offended by their honesty. Use social stories to explain alternative ways of communicating.
May ask inappropriate questions	Simply state that a particular question is inappropriate and will be dealt with at a later date. Teach about inappropriate questions in PSD classes.
May refuse to take part in an activity but find it difficult to explain why  Can shut down - refuse to talk / answer questions / look up	Shutting down or refusal to take part - just ignore and be very patient! Talk about it later and try to discover what the problem is - it may be something quite insignificant or possibly a sensory issue or pupil may not be feeling well.
Always want to answer the questions	Teach turn taking skills (visually). Make a rule about answering questions - 1 in 5 or in order round the class?
Difficulties with social interaction	
Like to be the leader in a group	Teach turn taking skills (visually). Make sure everyone who wants to, takes turns to be the group leader.
Have a strong sense of justice / fairness	Be as fair as possible.  Use social stories, comic strip cartoons (Carol Gray) to explain other points of view.
Don't pick up social cues	Use role play / friendship groups to teach social cues



Will not make friends easily, may not want friends, can't keep friends	DSI / PSP / Computer clubs to encourage friendships. Encourage parents to be pro-active. Use social stories and PSD materials to teach pupils how to be a friend and how to maintain friendships.
Difficulties with Social Imagination (restricted range of activities, behaviour and interests)	
Very anxious to finish work	Practise stopping work and doing another activity then coming back. Have a specific place for non-finished work.
Find it hard to retain information – e.g. tables may be a problem	Most pupils who have ASD are visual learners so a flow chart or diagram may help them to remember something better.
May not perform well in examinations	Revision for examinations should begin earlier - parents usually need to help out.  Practise under examination conditions e.g. time allocated, working with minimal levels of assistance.  Examination concessions may be granted.
Lack organizational skills	Timetables or schedules - colour coded or with pictures. Send home too! Daily bag packing schedules.  Home / school book - all letters home and comments and reminders.  Trays for work from left to right.  Zip folders for loose sheets.  Homework given at beginning of class / day / week.  Colour code for individual subjects.
Do not like a change in routine	Give warning about changes that you know are going to happen - write them up beside the timetable. Build in a strategy for unexpected change such as a visual card which indicates that he or she will be supported through the change.  Prepare for fire drills, Christmas play practice and other changes to routine.
Need to know what is happening next	Use a visual concept for 'first and then'.  Encourage them to use timetables.

Will try to bring their particular interest into every activity	Allow them so many minutes to tell you about their interest - turn it into a 'rule'. Use their interests as motivation for work.
Like to do things their way	Use social stories, comic strip cartoons to explain other points of view. Teach the child or young person to think more flexibly. (see point about teaching change).
May be very negative	Challenge negativity. Have them to write a list of 'least awful' activities. Incorporate motivators.  Use an Achievement Book / charts to show progress
May be very anxious / cry easily	Be sympathetic / jolly them along / breathing exercises may help / listen to their fears and talk about them / counselling may help. The suggested strategies in this resource should help pupils to be less anxious.
Can become agitated / aggressive if frustrated or do not understand what to do or feel work is too difficult	Try to prevent frustration / aggression by recognizing signs e.g. hand-flapping / hair pulling (Know your pupil!) Check if they know what they have to do and how to do it. Help them to get started.  Teach them how to recognize their emotions and how to self regulate. See the following example.
May run off	Try to ensure pupil's safety.  Use an 'Emergency Card' / traffic light system / choices charts / stars in Home/school book / warning or encouragement cards / Social stories
May lash out verbally or physically / throw a tantrum	Use a Quiet Corner / Chill-out Room - do not confront and do not attempt to deal with the issue until the pupil is calm - ask them if they're ready - they will know.
May destroy work	Be prepared to give a clean sheet of paper to begin again - erasing sometimes isn't enough. The offending page may have to be removed!  Use a mini white board as a new or draft copy.
Want everything to be correct / neat	Allow time for drafts to be written. Perhaps practise on a mini white board before transferring to final copy.  Introduce social stories around mistakes being acceptable.

## The Middletown Centre for Autism



Middletown Centre for Autism (MCA), located in County Armagh, was established in March 2007 and is jointly funded by the Department of Education (DE), Northern Ireland and the Department of Education and Skills (DES), Republic of Ireland. The purpose of the Centre is to support the promotion of excellence in the development and coordination of education services to children and young people with ASD Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

### **The Centre's Services**

Under the Centre's Research and Development service we are currently delivering an advice and guidance service, research service and training programmes for parents and professionals.

An advice and guidance service is available for children and young people who despite specialist input continue to experience difficulties in their educational setting.

The Centre is currently working intensively for up to three terms (depending on need) in a transdisciplinary, capacity building model in schools and homes in Northern Ireland.

The Centre delivers a wide-ranging training programme throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland annually from October to June for professionals. Training times are varied and include weekend events, twilight sessions and whole day term time courses. Please visit the Centre's website for full details of forthcoming trainings.

The Centre offers local training programmes for parents in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Teachers can direct parents to the website or the Centre directly for further information.

The Centre hosts major training events on weekends throughout the year for parents and professionals. They have proved to be very popular and effective. The following is an example of a major weekend training event. It was entitled 'Attention ASD' and was delivered by Gina Davies, a specialist Speech and Language Therapist with over 25 years experience. She offers innovative ideas on enhancing attention and communication skills for children and young people with ASD.

A research bulletin is produced bi-annually on topics which complement the training delivered from the Centre. Previous titles have included:

- Educational Assessment
- Transition
- Mental Health Issues and ASD
- ASD and Girls

(These can be downloaded from the Centre's website

[www.middlestownASD.com](http://www.middlestownASD.com)

Pupils on the autistic spectrum present with unusual patterns in their responses to sensory input. Gunilla Gerland, an adult on the autistic spectrum, describes her experience of being overwhelmed by sensory input:

*..certain sounds frightened me- dogs barking, mopeds, tractors and cars, engines of various kinds. They would explode inside my head and make me lose all sense of the way my body related to my surroundings. It was like being flung out into space- whoosh- quite without warning. Sometimes I screamed and covered my ears...Some sounds around me I hardly reacted to at all!*

Kenneth Hall, a young man with a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome, explains how his auditory sensitivity affected him in the classroom:

*..one thing I don't like is crowds. For example, I just hated the classroom. The noise annoyed me. At the time, the sound of pupils' chatter was like dynamite going off in my ears!*

There is a wealth of scientific research indicating the high incidence of sensory processing differences experienced by pupils and young people on the autistic spectrum. The majority of studies carried out indicate that over 70% of pupils with ASD have sensory processing difficulties (Adamson et al, 2006). These difficulties can be observed in their responses and behaviours in the classroom and beyond.

It should be noted that sensory processing difficulties are not exclusive to ASD and are often observed in other developmental disorders (e.g. Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), Down Syndrome, Developmental Coordination Disorder).

## Recommended Resources

The list of possible resources to meet the sensory needs of children in school is extensive and the recommendations below are therefore just a 'Top Ten' list of useful resources.

More ideas for resources may be found at any of the suppliers below or by consulting the books in the Recommended Reading section.

### Suppliers

Some of the many suppliers of sensory resources include:

- [www.learningspaceni.co.uk](http://www.learningspaceni.co.uk)
- [www.thinkingtoys.ie](http://www.thinkingtoys.ie)
- [www.rompa.com](http://www.rompa.com)
- [www.spacekraft.co.uk](http://www.spacekraft.co.uk)
- [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

### Sensory Resources: Top Ten Recommendations

The resources listed below are available from a range of suppliers and prices will vary. It is therefore advisable to search catalogues and the Internet for the most competitive price or to purchase from a company on your school's procurement list.

1. Movin' sit cushion (Junior or Standard): a specialised cushion which provides movement (and tactile) input. It provides sensory input for sensation seeking children, thus helping them to stay in their seats for longer periods; it may also increase the alertness levels of under-responsive children by giving the brain sensory stimulation.

2. Southpaw Bear Hug: a lycra garment with Velcro which can be wrapped around the child's body to give deep tactile and proprioceptive input. This is suitable for calming over-responsive children when they are feeling anxious or stressed.
3. Weighted blanket: a thin but heavy blanket which will provide deep tactile and proprioceptive input. This is suitable for calming over-responsive children when they are feeling anxious or stressed.
4. Weighted vest: a waistcoat with weights which can be added to special adapted pockets in the garment. This provides deep tactile and proprioceptive input, which may be calming for the over-responsive child.
5. Chewy tube: a non-food alternative for children who tend to chew and bite objects. This will provide deep tactile and proprioceptive input to assist in achieving the calm and alert state.
6. Therapy/exercise/gym/Swiss ball: inflatable balls in a range of sizes suitable for various ages and heights. The child can sit on the ball to get movement input in order to increase alertness. The child may also lie on his stomach on the ball and weightbear through his arms in order to achieve deep proprioceptive input, which will be both calming and alerting. Ensure the ball is of the correct size for the child (he should be able to place feet on floor when sitting on it).
7. Peanut ball: this will provide the same input as the therapy ball described above, but its shape provides greater stability. It is again available in a range of sizes to suit a range of heights and ages.
8. Therabands: rubber exercise bands which can be stretched to provide resistive activity. This resistance exercise gives deep proprioceptive input to the muscles and subsequently can facilitate the calm and alert state.

9. Fidget toys: this can include koosh balls, tangle toys, stress balls etc. They provide tactile input and so will help the sensation seeker or under-responsive child to remain alert and focused on task. Fidget toys can also calm children who are feeling anxious. They are available from the suppliers suggested above or may be easily and inexpensively purchased in local shops.
  
10. Ear defenders: worn in the same way as headphones to significantly reduce the volume of noise from the surrounding environment. This will assist children who are distressed or distracted in noisy environments or by specific noises.

Detailed advice on sensory issues and ASD are available from the Centre and will be available through the LNI C2k website during 2011.



## Bibliography and Recommended Reading

Adamson A, O'Hare A and Graham C (2006) Impairments in sensory modulation in children with autistic spectrum disorder. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 69, 357-64.

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Yack E, Aquilla P and Sutton S (2002) *Building Bridges through Sensory Integration*. Future Horizons: Texas.

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*Middletown Centre's training prospectus and research bulletins can be downloaded from the website. Please visit the website or contact the Centre for further information and/or to reserve a place on trainings*

[www.middletownASD.com](http://www.middletownASD.com)

Email: [training@middletownASD.com](mailto:training@middletownASD.com)

Call: 0044 (0) 28 3751 5750

*There is no charge to professionals, parents and family members for training events.*

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## Additional Professional Qualifications

- Master of Education (MEd) in Autistic Spectrum Disorders, Birmingham University. Distance Education.  
[http://www.education.bham.ac.uk/programmes/cpd/courses/ASD\\_children.shtml](http://www.education.bham.ac.uk/programmes/cpd/courses/ASD_children.shtml)
- Master of Science (MSc) in Autistic Spectrum Disorders: Queen's University Belfast  
<http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEducation/ProspectiveStudents/PostgraduateTaught/ProfessionalDevelopmentEducation/AutisticSpectrumDisordersMSc/>
- Institute of Child Education and Psychology (ICEP Europe) formerly known as Profexcel  
<http://www.icepe.co.uk/>
- Post Graduate Certificate in Asperger's Syndrome.  
[www.ASD.org.uk/training](http://www.ASD.org.uk/training)
- ASD NI  
<http://www.ASDni.org/training/calendar.asp>

## Useful Contacts

### Education and Library Boards

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Western Education and Library Board  
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Call: 028 9077 8602

Autism NI  
[www.autismni.org.uk](http://www.autismni.org.uk)

National Autistic Society  
[www.ASD.org.uk](http://www.ASD.org.uk)

ASD Northern Ireland  
[www.ASDni.org](http://www.ASDni.org)

Irish Society for ASD  
[www.ASD.ie](http://www.ASD.ie)

Appendix 1

# Pupil Profile

\_\_\_\_\_ Primary School

## Learning Support Centre / ASD Specific Class

Name of Pupil : _____	Year Group : _____
Current Class : _____	Teacher : _____
Background Information	
Main Difficulties / Challenges	
Parents' Views / Other Information	
Opportunities for Integration including support required	

## Action Plan (stage 5)

\_\_\_\_\_ School

Name of Pupil:		DoB:	Age:
Teacher:	Class:	Period Covered:	
Strengths and Successes			
Nature of Difficulties			
Medical or Pastoral Arrangements			
	Targets for Pupil to Achieve	Teaching and Learning Strategies	
Literacy			
Numeracy			
ASD Profile - Communication			
ASD Profile - Social Skills			
ASD Profile - Obsessive rituals / Behaviour			
School Support Arrangements		Specialist Support Arrangements	
Parental Support Arrangements		Pupil Comments (if appropriate)	
Arrangements for Monitoring			
SENCO's signature : _____		Parent(s) / Guardian(s)	
Parent's signature: _____		informed: <input type="checkbox"/>	

Appendix 3

**Schedule Change Checklist for \_\_\_\_\_**

*(Initial and date)*

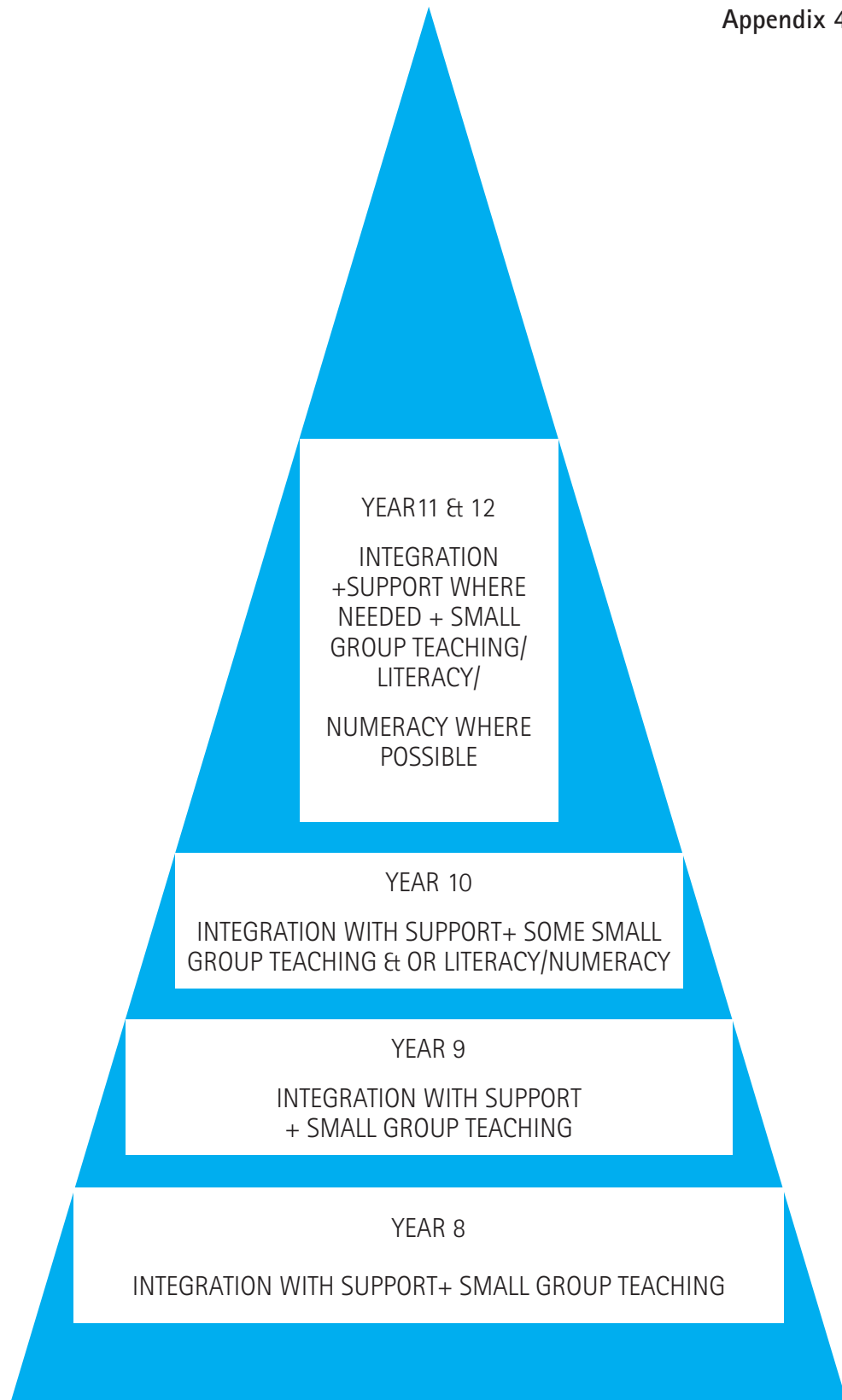
Objectives	Requires physical prompt	Requires verbal & point prompt	Requires verbal prompt	Tolerates independently (100%)
Tolerates change of schedule cue				

**Work Station Checklist for \_\_\_\_\_**

*(Initial and date)*

Objectives	Achieved with physical prompt	Achieved with verbal & point prompt	Achieved with verbal prompt	Achieved independently (100%)
Work at station with 3 physical screens				
Work at station with 1 physical screen				
Work at table with no physical screens (on periphery of class group)				
Work at table with one other child sitting nearby				
Work at table with one other child sitting opposite/or beside				
Work at table alongside more than one other child				

## Appendix 4





## Acknowledgements

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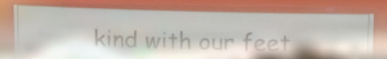
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# Understanding & Managing Social, Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)



Department of  
**Education**

[www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)

AN ROINN  
**Oideachais**

MÄNNYSTRIE O  
**Lear**



# Understanding and Managing Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)

## Introduction

*"It is axiomatic that all pupils... remain entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum...pupils with discipline and behaviour problems will be dealt with in their normal classroom setting, through the application of intervention measures including the provision of school based support for schools and pupils".*

(DENI, 1998b, p.18).

The Department of Education (DE) continues to be committed to the inclusion of all pupils including those with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) and this chapter aims to provide support for school staff.

This section outlines the principles of effective behaviour management and should contribute to teachers' understanding of children's behaviour and the challenges it can present. Causes of inappropriate behaviour are considered and core values and a range of positive behaviour management strategies are suggested to support the development of whole school positive ethos and policy. Schools should find the content useful in promoting effective inclusive practice for pupils with SEBD and improving the learning and teaching for all.

According to Elton (1989) the majority of inappropriate behaviours within schools were "high frequency and low intensity", such as "talking out of turn", "calculated idleness", and "work avoidance". (Elton, 1989, p.60). Behaviour, however, is on a continuum and pupils with SEBD can present with high frequency, low intensity behaviours or a range of more inappropriate and anti-social behaviours. These make up a significant proportion of the 25% of pupils who have been identified by DE (2010) as having "barriers to learning" (DE, 2010b, p.11). According to Fogell and Long (1997, p.7) the continuum

includes "acting out" behaviours such as aggressive and attention seeking behaviours or "acting in" behaviours such as anxiety and withdrawal.

These challenges present difficulties for schools in creating or maintaining orderly environments, in ensuring effective learning and teaching, and in promoting and sustaining good behaviour.

In relation to effective behaviour management, research has continually shown that successful schools have:

- good leadership;
- positive working relationships;
- whole school policies;
- procedures for managing pupil behaviour;
- a welcoming environment;
- pleasant working conditions;
- effective classroom management strategies which focus on the acknowledgement of the positive;
- effective whole school systems which give flexible support to all members of the school community; and
- systems for monitoring all of the above.

(Elton, 1989; Harris, 2000; DE, 2001; Logan and Rickinson 2005; Steer, 2009).

The Department of Education school census of 2009–2010 gives 6,316 pupils identified with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Resource File for Special Educational Needs  
**UNDERSTANDING & MANAGING SOCIAL,  
EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES**

Schools should create an ethos whereby there are opportunities for all staff to gain understanding of the causes of inappropriate behaviour and research has shown that these causes have changed over time.

## Causes of Inappropriate Behaviour

Lehman, Hawkins and Catalan (1994) identified some of the "in school factors" and "out of school factors" which can lead to inappropriate behaviour and these are presented in the tables below.

**Table 1 In school factors which influence pupil behaviour**

In school factors
<p><b><u>The Environment</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Lack of proper ventilation</li> <li>▶ Physical problems of limited space</li> <li>▶ Special occasions which cause excitement, e.g. Christmas, a windy day, fire drills</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>The Child</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Tired due to lack of proper rest</li> <li>▶ Hungry due to insufficient or inappropriate food</li> <li>▶ Poor or inappropriate social skills</li> <li>▶ Need for attention from teacher or parent</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>The Teacher</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Offering poorly differentiated curriculum leading to either frustration or boredom</li> <li>▶ Lack of knowledge of pupils</li> <li>▶ Poor management skills such as being inconsistent, laissez-faire, over-reliance on domination or lack of reinforcement of appropriate behaviour</li> <li>▶ Poor diction</li> <li>▶ Lack of clarity in explaining expectations for behaviour or subject</li> <li>▶ Lack of or confusing instruction in subject matter</li> <li>▶ Meeting the expectations of exam results and league tables</li> <li>▶ Lack of professional development on sebd</li> <li>▶ Teacher stress</li> </ul>

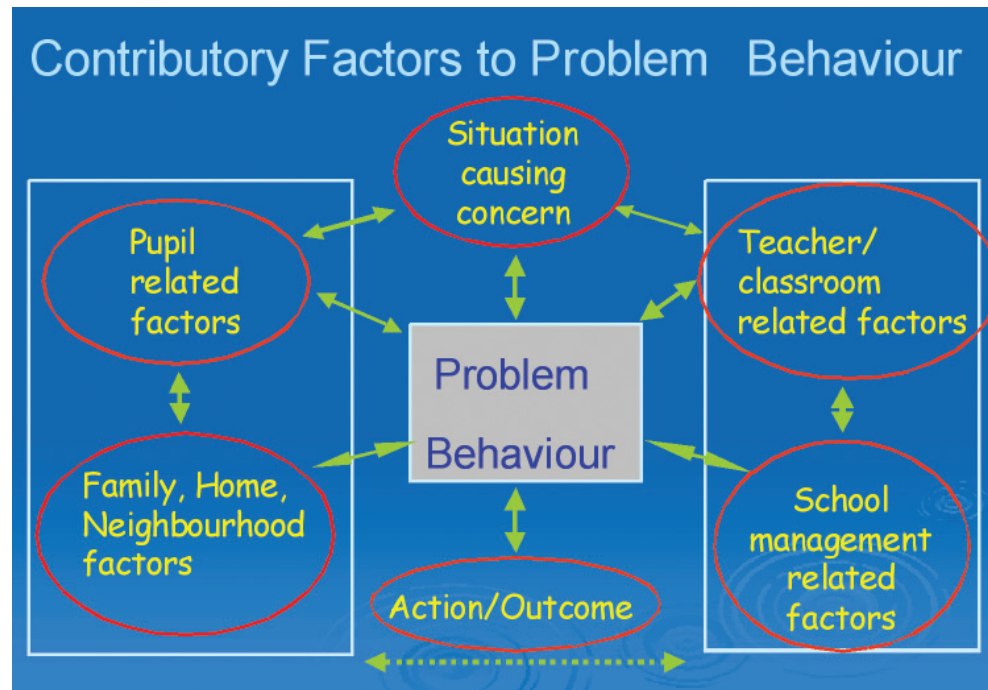


**Table 2 Out of school factors which influence pupil behaviour**

<b>Out of school factors</b>
<p><b><u>Family Circumstances</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Child's position in the family</li><li>▶ Child's relationship with parent/siblings/grandparents etc</li><li>▶ Divorce/bereavement</li><li>▶ Mental health problems</li><li>▶ Family trauma</li><li>▶ Alcohol or drug addiction</li></ul>
<p><b><u>The Neighbourhood</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Child's popularity</li><li>▶ Peer relationships</li><li>▶ Bullying</li><li>▶ Social problems</li><li>▶ Civic disturbance</li></ul>
<p><b><u>The Child Him/Herself</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Medical/health problems</li><li>▶ Biological factors which may influence behaviour</li><li>▶ Events in the child's past: traumatic events, abuse, changes in family circumstances etc</li></ul>

McNamara (1999) also identified contributory factors which can cause concern. These are presented in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1 – Contributory Factors to Problem Behaviour**



(McNamara, 1999).

More recent research has shown that the nature of childhood has changed. Over a 25 year period (1974 -1999), behaviour problems have doubled and emotional problems have increased by 70% (Hagell, 2004). Furthermore, Moss (2010) identified that there is now more "adulteration of Childhood", "Infantilisation of Adults" and an "overprogramming of family life" which have led to some children and young people not knowing how to manage social behaviour and not seeing the point of responsible behaviour.

Research also shows that children and young people are influenced by home and community (70%) and by school (30%); (data presented by John West-Burnham at a joint Regional Training Unit (RTU) / Queen's University Belfast (QUB) conference in QUB, 2008). He emphasised the importance of schools working hard to "get their 30% right".

In order to understand and manage pupils with SEBD, Moss (2010) suggests that teachers need to use 'Social Mediation' – the conscious identification, negotiation and transmission of social values to address inappropriate behaviours. In other words teachers need to define and then teach the behaviours they need to promote and sustain good behaviour.

### **Promoting and Sustaining Good Behaviour**

This section provides an understanding of the core values which underpin good practice in the management of SEBD. The content also provides a structure and a range of strategies to promote and sustain good behaviour.

1. Core Values to Underpin Ethos, Policy and Practice
2. The Reflective/Assertive Practitioner
3. Effective Planning and Classroom Management
4. Positive Behaviour Management
5. Dealing with Difficult Situations

Teachers should use the strategies suggested here to complement the Regional Good Practice Guidelines (Education and Library Boards, 2009) as part of their positive behaviour management. In addition to this, schools need to develop a whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour through the development and implementation of an effective Positive Behaviour Policy.

Even when all of this is in place, it is still possible for some SEBD to become a significant barrier to learning and social development and there may be a need for further support from external agencies. It is therefore necessary that schools "have regard" to the Code of Practice (DENI, 1998a) and follow the staged approach to ensure appropriate identification, assessment and provision for more specific types of SEBD.

The remainder of this section provides some advice in relation to understanding and managing pupils who have been diagnosed or present with more challenging behaviours.

In summary, inclusive practice and employing a proactive approach with early intervention may result in pupils' SEBD being addressed more effectively in schools. Subsequently this may lead to a reduction in the number of pupils being referred for external support or being suspended or expelled.

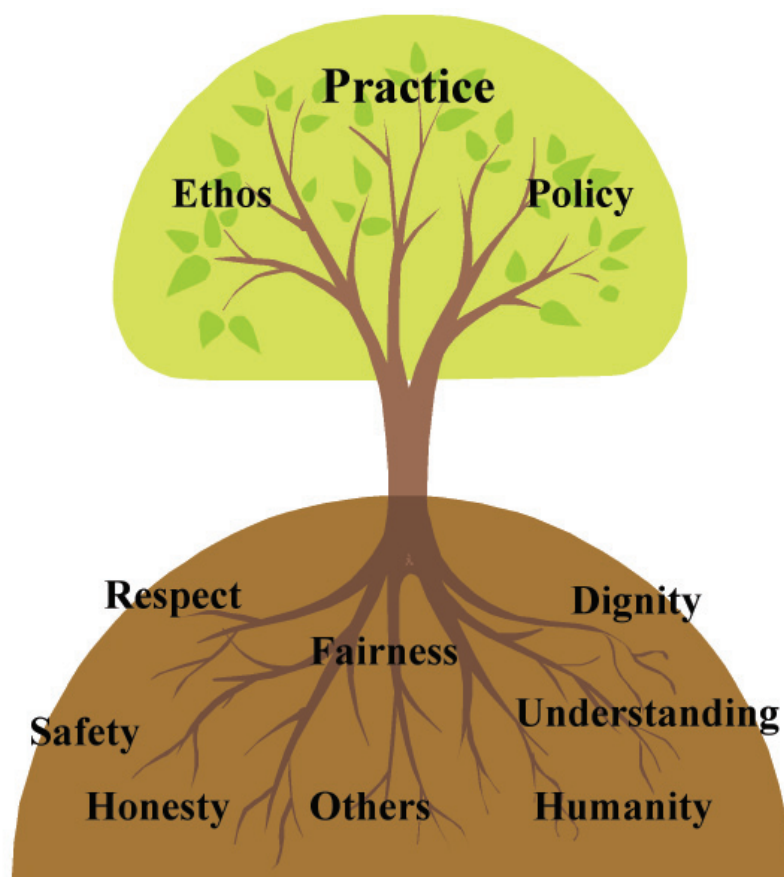
## **Understanding and Managing SEBD**

### **1. CORE VALUES**

Core values should be generated by all members of the school community and should be the basis of school ethos, policy and practice. These values should underpin and promote the development of attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary in the understanding and management of pupils with SEBD.

- Values that underpin ethos, policy and practice should focus on the best interests of the pupil. These are presented in Figure 2 below:

**Figure 2 – Values that underpin Ethos, Policy and Practice**



- Values need to take cognisance of the Six Outcomes for Children and Young People of Northern Ireland 10-Year Strategy (2006):
  - (i) to be healthy;
  - (ii) to stay safe;
  - (iii) to enjoy and achieve;
  - (iv) to make a positive contribution;
  - (v) to achieve economic well-being; and
  - (vi) to live in a society which respects their rights.
- Behaviour generally has a purpose.
- Many behaviour problems are the result of a lack of self-regulation within the person, or a lack of knowledge of the acceptable way to do things.
- All human behaviour results from an individual's response to complicated webs of influence e.g. their environment and the individual's temperament.
- Behavioural interventions which seek only to control behaviour, rather than to understand its meaning, are unlikely to support individuals in reaching their potential.
- As behaviour is learned, appropriate behaviour needs to be taught.
- Pupils need to feel secure and have a sense of belonging and acceptance in order to behave appropriately.

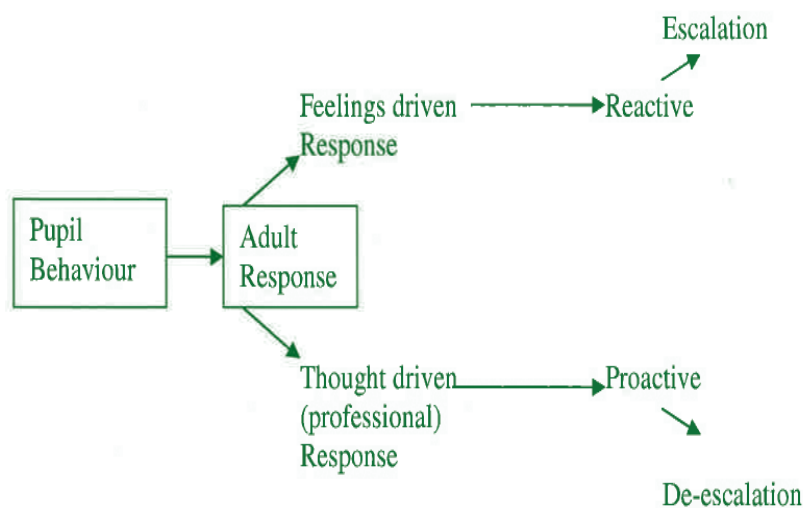
- "Good behaviour keeps pupils safe, reduces stress for teachers and contributes to a welcoming and caring environment in which pupils can develop as people and both pupils and teachers can do their best work". (DE, 2001, p1).
- Pupils with SEBD are defined as having learning difficulties. "They may fail to meet expectations in school and in some, but by no means all, cases may disrupt the education of others". (Code of Practice, DENI, 1998a, p.74).
- Schools can and do make a difference. (West-Burnham, 2008).

## 2. THE REFLECTIVE/ASSERTIVE PRACTITIONER

### The Reflective Practitioner

- The reflective practitioner should continually reflect on and examine his/her own behaviour and be aware of the consequences of proactive and reactive responses when managing pupils with SEBD. This is presented in Figure 3 below:

**Figure 3 – Adult Response to Pupil Behaviour**



- The reflective practitioner should continually reflect on and examine his/her own practice in relation to managing pupils with SEBD, asking the question 'is there a better way?'

### The Assertive Practitioner

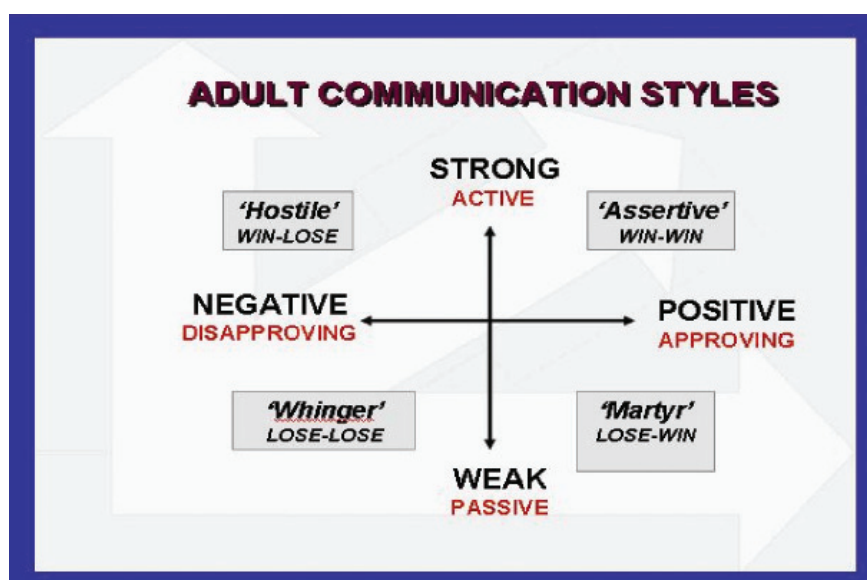
Assertive adults in the classroom must:

- Know what they want and use clear verbal communication.
- Have a plan and follow it through.
- Develop a positive proactive approach to behaviour management.
- Be committed to teaching appropriate behaviour in the classroom.
- Create a positive classroom environment in which teachers can teach and pupils can learn.
- Communicate clearly and positively providing support to pupils.
- Teach behaviour emphasising the aspect of pupil choice when appropriate.
- Be consistent.
- Be sensitive to the needs of others.
- Be able to use an extensive repertoire of appropriate responses such as firm, gentle, humorous.
- Positively acknowledge people who meet their expectations.



- Remain calm in difficult situations – remember that the only person you can make calm is yourself.
- Let others know in a respectful manner when they are not happy with their actions.
- Be aware that communication styles are important and should be used accordingly to achieve the appropriate outcome. This is presented in Figure 4 below:

**Figure 4 – Adult Communication Styles**



### 3. EFFECTIVE PLANNING AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

When managing pupils with SEBD, it is essential to establish an organised, orderly classroom and to have clear plans as to how appropriate and inappropriate behaviour will be managed in a positive way.

Listed below are a range of strategies which are proven to have been effective in contributing to an orderly learning environment.

- Have realistic expectations for behaviour and learning.

- Arrive at class on time. It is good practice to 'receive' your pupils.
- Have an aesthetically pleasing and functional classroom.
- Plan appropriate seating arrangements and be prepared to change the arrangements to suit the activity.
- Have well-prepared differentiated lessons but be flexible enough to change if needed.
- Create a positive climate at the beginning of each day / lesson.
- Give work in small manageable steps.
- Use multisensory methods where possible.
- Consider learning styles – visual, auditory and kinesthetic.
- Remind pupils of past success – highlight the positives.
- Teach a maximum of five positively-worded rules such as 'Follow adult directions promptly' or 'We always try our best'. Display them prominently in the classroom.
- Use positive feedback e.g. "Well done, John, I liked the way you settled and completed your work this morning."
- Use positive acknowledgement – keep tangible rewards to a minimum.
- Apply appropriate consequences: have a hierarchy of how behaviour will be managed if the pupils break the rules - from least intrusive to most intrusive.

- Teach and rehearse clear routines until they become habituated. This needs to be done for non-academic and academic activities such as lining up, completing work.
- Have a cue for gaining attention such as '321', 'eyes on me' (EOM).
- Ensure clarity of instruction e.g. PRINT

Purpose of the activity

Resources needed (includes clear desks)

In or out of seat (address behaviour needed)

Noise levels – teach and rehearse noise levels including silence, partner talk, playground talk

Time for activity and transition; and always give time reminders throughout the activity and remind them a few minutes before the end.

- Use positive scanning - if you are working with one pupil or a small group of pupils continue to scan the room and frequently acknowledge positive, on-task behaviour.
- Circulate the room and acknowledge positive on-task behaviour.

#### **4. POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

The aim of positive behaviour management is to promote and sustain good behaviour through a continual focus on the positive:

- Highlight what is going well in the classroom.

- Give attention to pupils displaying 'on-task' behaviour as opposed to highlighting inappropriate behaviours.
- Try to manage inappropriate behaviours in a positive way.

Listed below are a range of strategies which are proven to have been effective in positive behaviour management.

- **Positive Feedback – Acknowledge / Approve / Affirm:**  
Acknowledge (notice and describe the behaviour), approve it (say why it is good) and affirm (apply a positive label to the pupil) e.g. *"Thank you for tidying up so quickly - now we can have a break - you are a great helper"*. Use very, very frequently.
- **Positive Correction** – tell the pupils what you want them to do, i.e. not what you don't want them to do e.g. *"walk"* instead of *"stop running"*, *"hands up"* instead of *"stop shouting"*. Avoid saying *"don't"* or *"stop"*.
- **Positive Repetition** – when you give a direction ask someone who knows what to do to repeat it rather than focusing on the one who doesn't know.
- **Non-verbal Cues** – hands up, finger on lips, the "look".
- **Casual questions** – *"Got your pencil, John? Know what to do?"*
- **Direction** – tell them what to do, say *"Thank you"* in advance, walk off.
- **Give take-up time** – give a clear specific direction in a non-confrontational way and move away from the pupil with a clear expectation that a pupil will comply.

- **Re-direction** – repeat direction without being sidetracked. Use thanks and take-up time – give them time – don't stand over them in a confrontational way.
- **Tactically ignore** – ignore secondary behaviour if the pupil is compliant with the primary behaviour requested e.g. if the pupil begins the task (primary behaviour) when asked, ignore any annoying secondary behaviours such as huffing or muttering.
- **Physical Proximity** – move closer to a disruptive pupil.
- **Proximity Praise** – praise to pupils complying may give a private message to those not complying. When a non-compliant pupil complies, notice and comment positively.
- **Distraction / Diversion** – give an alternative task or activity to a disruptive pupil without highlighting the inappropriate behaviour.
- **When / Then and First / Then** – first we do this, then we do that – avoids "no".
- **Rule Reminder** – refer to rule, use thank you and give take-up time.
- **Hand Up Rule** – e.g. *"I'm looking for a quiet hand"* or *"Remember what it is we do when we want to speak"*.
- **Where / What?** – *"Where should you be?"* (in my seat) *"What should you be doing?"* (my work)
- **Choices** – *"Put your (e.g. magazine/comic) on my desk or in your bag – which are you going to do?"* The last choice you give is more likely to be taken up therefore you need to think about the order in which you give them to pupils (always give preferred

outcome as the last choice). Give take up time. Remind of consequences if necessary.

- **Broken Record** – calmly repeat request or rule or consequence; avoid confrontation or being drawn into argument. Stay neutral.
- **Partial Agreement** – in response to excuses, say *"That may be so (he was talking to me) but I need you to get on with the work"*.
- **Private Reprimand** – a quiet word rather than a public confrontation.
- **Repair and Rebuild** – as soon as possible after a reprimand, find an opportunity to say something positive about the pupil – *"Catch them being good"*.
- **Follow up – follow through** – it is the certainty rather than the severity of consequences which is important.
- **Consider using a Think Sheet** as a consequence to help pupils choose a more appropriate behaviour in future. e.g.
  - ▶ what rule did you break?
  - ▶ what was the effect?
  - ▶ what are you going to do to put things right?
  - ▶ what will you do next time?
- Other helpful interventions for younger children include –
  - ▶ use of visual timetable – whole class or individual

- ▶ choice boards – limit the choice to two or three things to help pupils who find it difficult to choose activities
- ▶ use of social stories (Gray – in press)
- ▶ buddy system at playtime to encourage good friendships
- ▶ use an “I am working for” board
- ▶ use a “noiseometer” – visual scale of noise level expected
- ▶ Golden Time – a time when pupils can choose a preferred activity
- ▶ positive news notes maintain positive relationships with parents/guardians
- ▶ stickers / certificates
- ▶ circle time sessions (Mosley, 1998)
- ▶ short withdrawal time e.g. thinking chair with support until ready to rejoin group

## **5. STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH DIFFICULT SITUATIONS**

A difficult situation may arise unexpectedly, or may be a frequent occurrence for a minority of pupils. In the latter case, there may be an agreed behaviour management plan to deal with the pupil's behaviour.

In dealing with difficult situations, adults will need to make professional judgements based on their experiences and the knowledge of the individual pupil.

Listed below are some points to remember and some strategies which may be effective in managing difficult situations. It may also be appropriate to seek further help in line with the Code of Practice (DENI, 1998a).

Points to remember when dealing with difficult situations

- stay calm
- use a quiet voice
- use neutral language and keep it to a minimum
- avoid invading personal space unless necessary
- avoid prolonged eye contact
- stand still
- state expectations clearly – remember to tell pupil what you want him/her to do
- remind pupil of consequences (use cautiously)
- state what will happen next
- it may be necessary to remove the audience
- withdrawal – move pupil away from the group for a short period. This models a non-violent response, gives 'cooling off' time and time for reflection. It also teaches that inappropriate behaviours will not be tolerated and protects the rights of all.
- exiting – refer to Safe Handling Policy. (DE, 2004).
- recognise and understand that all individuals may become angry/aggressive and be aware of the conflict spiral. This is presented in Figure 5 overleaf:



**Figure 5: Understanding Aggression: Conflict Spiral**



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- Reflect the feelings of the pupil - *"I can see you are upset."*
- Always remember to give a thought-driven professional response to a pupil's behaviour with a view to de-escalating the situation.
- All behaviour is a means of communication. Habitual behaviour serves a purpose but more appropriate behaviour can be learned. How we respond is very important in teaching and achieving the desired behaviour.
- Use the W5 approach as an assessment tool:
  - ▶ What?
  - ▶ Where?
  - ▶ When?
  - ▶ Who?
  - ▶ Why?

e.g.	what?	-	John is shouting out
	where?	-	in Mrs X's class
	when?	-	continually (every day)
	who?	-	(at whom) teacher
	why?	-	appears to need attention

Set realistic targets e.g. *'John will put his hand up when he wants to speak.'*

Teacher strategies to help John achieve his targets:

- rehearsal and reminders at beginning of lesson.
- positive acknowledgement when John puts his hand up.
- consequence for continual shouting out.

Renew targets and strategies as necessary:

- if something doesn't work, stop doing it.
- notice what does work and do more of it.
- ensure consistency of approach from all adults.
- give the following messages to the pupil:

*"I want you to succeed in my class."*

*"I won't give up on you."*

*"You are responsible for your own behaviour."*

## **Summary**

The principles of effective behaviour management outlined here should contribute to teachers' understanding and management of behaviour.

Core values have been identified and a range of positive behaviour management strategies for developing whole school ethos, policy and effective practice have been presented.

Teachers should find the information useful in promoting and sustaining good behaviour, developing behaviour management plans for the classroom and in developing individual plans for pupils with SEBD.

Schools should also find the content of this chapter useful in promoting inclusive practice for pupils with SEBD and improving learning and teaching for all.

## **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder**

Schools may find the following guides, developed and produced by the Education and Library Boards, useful for addressing the specific needs of pupils with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). A Practical Guide for Schools. (ELB, 2004)

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Your Child with ADHD: A Practical Guide for Parents and Carers. (ELB, 2004)

Both guides can be accessed on-line at:

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/adhd\\_-\\_a\\_practical\\_guide\\_for\\_schools.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/adhd_-_a_practical_guide_for_schools.pdf)

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/adhd-a\\_practical\\_guide\\_for\\_parents\\_and\\_carers.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/adhd-a_practical_guide_for_parents_and_carers.pdf)

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# Mathematics for Children with Special Educational Needs



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# Mathematical Problems

## Introduction

*"There are many factors that affect a child's understanding of maths, from lack of confidence and poor memory, to being moved on to new work before sufficiently understanding the previous underlying concepts. For some children there may also be physical or sensory difficulties; for others there may just simply be gaps in their knowledge due to a change of school or missing lessons through illness.*

*Sometimes the issues may be similar to those of struggling readers, which can include specific learning difficulties or more general problems with concentration. Whatever the cause, there is always a solution."*

**[www.pearsonschoolsandfecolleges.co.uk/AssetsLibrary/PDFs/  
AddiitionalhelpinmathsarticlefromNASEN](http://www.pearsonschoolsandfecolleges.co.uk/AssetsLibrary/PDFs/AdditionalhelpinmathsarticlefromNASEN)**

In many instances, the perceived solution to a child's difficulty is to provide him with more opportunities to rehearse, revise or revisit basic mathematical concepts. More fundamental to the solution, is the teacher's identification, knowledge and understanding of the child's particular difficulty. Equipped with this information, the teacher will be better positioned to develop an appropriate intervention programme for the child, to advise the parents on how they can support their child's learning and to explain to the child the nature of his difficulty and the strategies he can use to take control of that difficulty.

In the following sections you will find practical suggestions, strategies and general good practice in relation to mathematics teaching. In applying this advice in your work with a child who is experiencing difficulty thinking with numbers, it will be important to select those aspects which best suit the individual child's needs, ensuring that the planned intervention programme allows for an appropriate balance between practical and written work which is underpinned by the child's understanding of the mathematical concept.

Inherent in the programme should be the opportunity for the child to verbalise what he is thinking and doing. The teacher has a crucial role to play in explicitly modelling thinking, desired strategies and the use of accurate mathematical language.

Everyone knows the feeling of struggling with a task that other people seem to understand thoroughly. This, of course, is how some children feel about maths and their difficulties are often rooted in misunderstandings of concepts. Understanding our mistakes can be a powerful learning experience.

Dyscalculia is the inability to understand mathematical concepts and this impacts across the whole of a child's mathematical learning. There are many forms of Dyscalculi and the two types most commonly found in schools are:

**DEVELOPMENTAL DYSCALCULIA** - where a child's potential is not met by their attainment in mathematics

**DYSCALCULIA** - inability to manage mathematical concepts across a complex wide range of areas for example, inconsistent results in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division alongside poor mental maths ability. Common mistakes often include difficulties with writing, reading and recalling numbers as well as number additions, substitutions, transpositions, omissions, and reversals. There may also be an inability to grasp and remember mathematical concepts, rules, formulas and sequences. Poor long term memory may also be an issue i.e. they may be able to perform mathematical operations one day, but not on a subsequent day. They may lack the "big picture/ whole picture" thinking.

It is our ambition that every child with SEN reaches their full potential in school, and can make a successful transition to adulthood and the world of further and higher education, training or work. To promote the welfare and interests of such children and to improve the support they receive, there now follows practical ideas and advice on how, we as teachers, can raise the levels of achievement and ignite a mathematical imagination for such pupils in our care.

## **GOOD PRACTICE**

### **WHERE DO I BEGIN?**

#### **1. Home and School Collaboration**

Living with, or teaching a child who has difficulty thinking with numbers can be an emotionally charged experience. Frustration and confusion can complicate the conversation between parents and teachers about what to do. Respect for each other and open communication can reduce tension and enable parents and teachers to benefit from each other's expertise and knowledge of the child from different perspectives. Working together, parents, teachers, and the children themselves, can inform one another about how best to address the child's needs.

- Share observations of the child's mathematics profile and discuss where the breakdown is occurring.
- Identify and discuss the child's strengths and interests.
- Explain the child's difficulties to the parents.
- Clarify the intervention program.
- Advise parents on how to support their child's learning.

#### **2. Talk with the child about their strengths and weaknesses**

These children often give up and see themselves as failures while others exhibit behaviour complications. The following suggestions can help parents and teachers work together to demystify children's difficulties with maths.

- Discuss strengths and interests.
- Articulate clearly for the child the exact nature of his/her difficulty.

- Provide the child with strategies to manage the difficulty.
- Emphasise optimism.
- Identify a Maths Mentor.
- Eliminate any stigma.
- Protect from humiliation.

### 3. Classroom Practice (Suggestions and Strategies)

#### GENERAL

- Every day is a mental maths day- introduce each session with a few minutes mental activity recording on white boards.
- Identify children with SEN in maths early on through appropriate diagnostic assessment and ensure that they receive early intervention.
- Allow time for talking about mathematics to clarify and refine thinking.
- Make learning as active and fun as possible - a positive experience.
- If there are no co-existing reading difficulties encourage the pupil to read problems aloud.
- Ensure children can participate with confidence.
- Build on the pupil's existing knowledge.
- Understand the pupil's mistakes - looking in depth at the errors.



- Learning from mistakes should build up children's confidence.
- Provide regular and appropriate practical activities to help the child develop an understanding of number bonds so that automaticity is achieved.
- Over-learn basic techniques.
- Limit copying from the board.
- Provide flow diagrams or tree diagrams for clarifying procedures.
- Teach basic concepts using concrete objects.
- Allow them to 'wean' themselves off concrete methods as their confidence and understanding increases.
- Provide specialised materials eg squared paper, highlighters, Cuisenaire rods, base-ten blocks, number-lines, multiplication tables, etc.
- Make your expectations explicit along with success criteria.
- Provide time for checking work.
- Give children opportunities to connect mathematical concepts to real-life situations.
- Lots of practical repetition.

### **MEMORY**

- Provide the technology (ICT) and tools needed for problem-solving.
- Teach basic maths facts.

- Use a personal maths rule book where the pupil has, in their own words, recorded strategies and maths vocabulary
- Teach maths in a variety of learning styles.
- Use games to reinforce concepts
- Practice little and often

### LANGUAGE

- Teach mnemonic strategies for solving word problems.
- Focus on the information provided in word problems.
- Encourage children to put problems into their own words.
- Teach and constantly model the use of accurate mathematical language.
- Encourage pupils to teach a concept to aid understanding.

### ATTENTION

- Children create a reminder card to keep on their desk or in their maths work book for quick reference to the strategy.
- Teach children how to self-monitor.
- Allow time for 'Brain Breaks'.
- Model how to carry out a task.
- Teach self-checking strategies (eg use of calculator).
- Identify topics of interest to children.

- Isolate steps - have the children focus on one step at a time.
- Ensure completion of each step in sequence.
- Ensure work sheets are uncluttered to ensure that the page does not look intimidating (if required, cover unnecessary text / diagrams etc).

### **SELF-ORGANISATION**

- Teach children how to plan a task.
- TIPS: Think (read and paraphrase), Information (what numbers and information do you need in order to solve the problem?), Problem (write equation), Solve.
- Stress the importance of organization - demonstrate, rehearse and review.
- Encourage self-evaluation.
- Set goals and record progress.
- Practice estimating.
- State the amount of time a task should take to slow down children down or to speed them up.
- Provide consistent, specific, positive and constructive feedback.

## FURTHER PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Further advice and training can be accessed through Education Board Maths Advisors. There are a number of excellent websites and professional groups dedicated to the teaching of mathematics and a selection is listed below:

[www.m-a.org.uk/jsp/index.jsp](http://www.m-a.org.uk/jsp/index.jsp)

(The Mathematical Association)

[www.learning-works.org.uk/](http://www.learning-works.org.uk/)

[www.berkshitemathematics.com/](http://www.berkshitemathematics.com/)

[www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/math/getfile.php?src=165/INSFlyer.pdf&ts=!B121cf29d70ec8a3d54a33343010cc](http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/math/getfile.php?src=165/INSFlyer.pdf&ts=!B121cf29d70ec8a3d54a33343010cc)

[www.ncetm.org.uk](http://www.ncetm.org.uk)

(National Centre for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics)

## **FURTHER READING**

Mathematics & Low Attainers T Lawson (SELB)

[www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/primary](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/primary)

[www.fiveminutebox.co.uk](http://www.fiveminutebox.co.uk)

<http://www.m-a.org.uk/jsp/index.jsp>

(The Mathematical Association)

[nrich.maths.org/public/viewer.php?obj\\_id=2719&part=](http://nrich.maths.org/public/viewer.php?obj_id=2719&part=)

[www.senteacher.org](http://www.senteacher.org)

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/misunderstoodminds/mathstrats.html#strategies>

<http://www.idonline.org/article/Dyscalculia>

[http://ddig.lboro.ac.uk/documents/DDIG\\_Leaflet\\_NEW.pdf](http://ddig.lboro.ac.uk/documents/DDIG_Leaflet_NEW.pdf)

<http://www.senco.me.uk/SEN45dyscalculia.pdf>

<http://www.mathsextra.com/about-specialneeds.htm>

## Sources and Credits

What is Dyscalculi? By Dr Bjorn Adler

Mathematics and Low Attainers by T Lawson (SELB Maths Support Publication)

Including all pupils in the numeracy lesson: Strategies for Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs Newham Education Department

[www.pearsonschoolsandcolleges.co.uk/AssetsLibrary/PDFs/AdditionalhelpinmathsarticlefromNASEN](http://www.pearsonschoolsandcolleges.co.uk/AssetsLibrary/PDFs/AdditionalhelpinmathsarticlefromNASEN)

National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics

[www.ncetm.org.uk](http://www.ncetm.org.uk)

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## Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)



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## Introduction

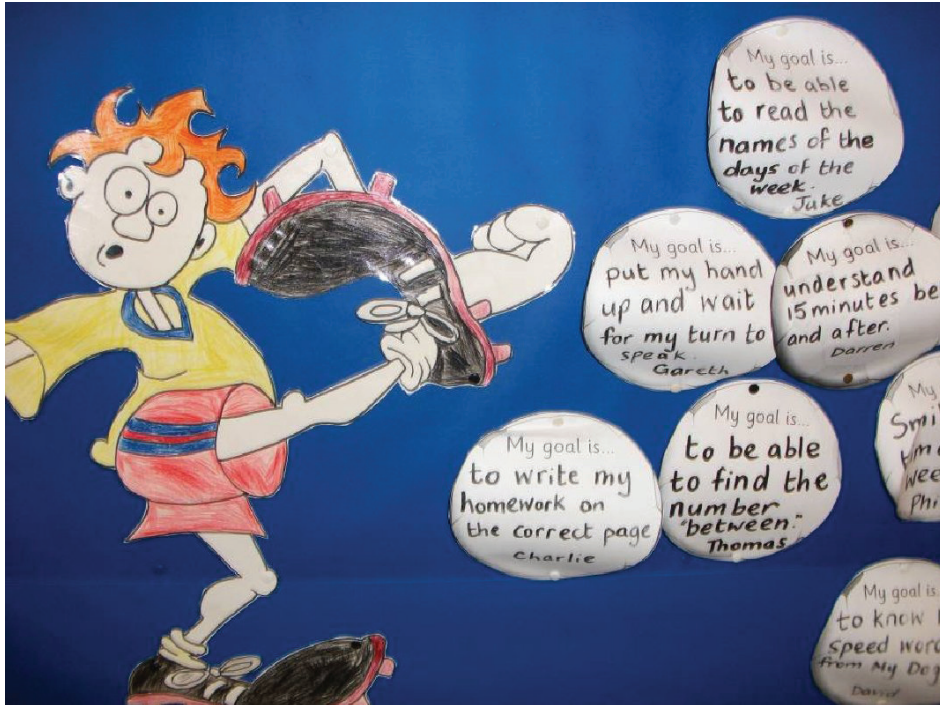
A student with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) is understood to display significant delay in reaching developmental milestones and may have much greater difficulty than their peers in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. They may also have associated speech and language delay, low levels of concentration and under-developed social, emotional and personal skills.

These students, using standardised measures of general ability and educational attainment, have scores in the range of 50 – 69.

Students with MLD may exhibit barriers to their learning such as:

- Difficulties with conceptualising and understanding abstract concepts.
- A lack of logical reasoning.
- An inability to transfer and apply skills to different situations.
- Poor fine and gross motor skills.
- Difficulty with personal organisation.
- Poor auditory/visual memory.
- Poor long and short term memory.
- Non-compliant and oppositional behaviours.
- A lack of awareness or responsibility for the consequences of actions.

Students with MLD may also have an additional diagnosis e.g. physical, visual or hearing impairment, ASD, ADD/ADHD which would lead to a greater complexity of needs.



However, it is important to remember that each child is an individual with their own needs, strengths and weaknesses. Establishing a profile of students' needs through a multi-agency, diagnostic approach is vital in order to put in place comprehensive education plans specifically tailored to address these needs.

### GOOD PRACTICE

- Develop whole school and individual teacher planning to set specific targets to address the pupil's particular needs.
- Develop a thorough understanding of, and empathy for, each child's individual needs so each may fulfil his/her fullest potential.
- Establish a supportive relationship with the student.
- Focus on what the student can do rather than what he/she cannot do and build on his/her strengths.

- Observe the students learning style and differentiate learning and teaching accordingly.
- Provide students with access to an age-appropriate differentiated curriculum.
- Tasks should be set which are within his/her capabilities and allow him/her to experience success.
- Simplify language, repeat words and clarify meanings.
- Ensure tasks have a clear meaning and purpose.
- Use short sequential steps when teaching.
- Build opportunities for over-learning and repetition into lessons.

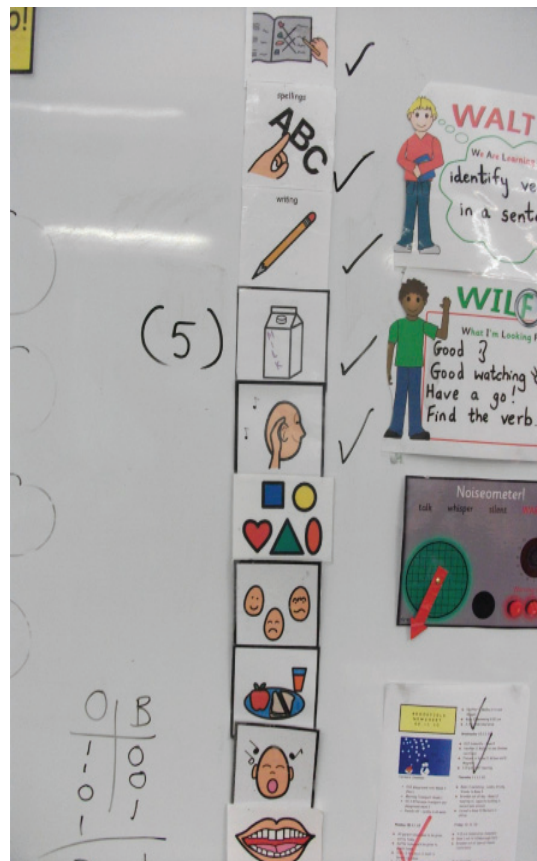




- Differentiate questioning as well as teaching. Include lots of praise and encouragement as part of the student's learning and teaching experience.
- Include lots of praise and encouragement as part of the student's learning and teaching experience.
- Help students to realise that making mistakes is part of the learning process.
- Use a wide range of learning resources (e.g. visual aids (charts/ artefacts), concrete objects, computer software, digital cameras, scanners and accessible texts).
- U.I.C.T. should be fully integrated into the daily learning programme.

- Students may derive benefit from assistive technology e.g. lower case keyboards, keyboard overlays, optical mice or roller balls.
- Classroom layout should reflect the needs of the individual students.
- Where appropriate an individual workspace may be made available to enable a student to work in a distraction-free environment.
- When appropriate provide worksheets to minimise the amount of writing required.
- Provide immediate feedback whenever possible.
- Be flexible allowing for sustained attention and concentration difficulties and provide "rest" opportunities.
- Where appropriate students should be involved in tasks which allow for participation and collaboration with peers.
- Maintain an emphasis on active learning through thinking, doing and problem solving.
- Provide opportunities for students to make choices about their learning and allow them sufficient time to think things through.
- Utilise assessment in order to set targets and monitor progress.
- Be explicit when giving instructions and use clear and unambiguous language.
- Help the students to complete tasks independently by ensuring that they know the following: What work do I have to do? How much do I have to do? How do I know if I am finished? Where do I put the finished work? What will I do next?

- Consider using a model or picture of the final goal or end product so that the student knows what is expected.
- Make the beginning and end points of a task clear and avoid ambiguity.
- Help the students to predict and organise their school day and to transition successfully between activities by using, if appropriate: routines to provide security and consistency; day/part day schedule in pictorial/written form; clear directional /labelling signs.
- Where appropriate use visual clues to highlight meaning – present tasks using symbols or give instructions with a written/pictorial prompt card.
- Do not introduce more than one new skill at a time.
- Encourage students to become independent learners.
- Use practical activities including games, simulation, role play and field trips.
- Use self-esteem and confidence building activities.
- Give students the opportunity to generalise knowledge and skills. Students moving into a different environment e.g. a new school, may lose some previously acquired skills and need to re-learn some skills.







- Develop personal and social skills. These may need to be explicitly taught. Particular attention should be paid to the listener-speaker relationship, turn taking, waiting in line working in groups.
- Provide clear and explicit boundaries for behaviour.
- Try to ensure consistency of approach is adopted by all those who are working with a student.
- Real and ongoing home-school communication systems should be set up.
- Schools should develop a culture of sharing good practice within schools and between mainstream/M.L.D. Units/Special schools.

## Further Reading and Resources

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NICCA) (2007) Guidelines for Teachers of Students with Moderate Learning Disabilities.

<http://www.ncca.ie/>

Special Education Support Service (SESS) provides advice and guidance on general learning difficulties.

<http://www.sess.ie/>

Teachernet: Information on Special Educational Needs, including the SEN Toolkit.

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/>

Teaching Expertise: will inform and your work with pupils with SEN

<http://www.teachingexpertise.com/special-educational-needs>

Buttriss, J. and Callander, A. (2008) A-Z of Special Needs For Every Teacher, London: Optimus Education.

ICEP Europe provides a comprehensive suite of specialised research based courses including Understanding Autism, ADHD, Aspergers Syndrome, General Learning Disabilities, Supporting and Managing Pupil Behaviour and Teaching Troubled Children.

<http://www.icepe.ie/>

The Oakwood Advisory Team aims to advise parents and schools in meeting the needs of children identified with ASD or whose difficulties can be described within the triad normally associated with ASD. The service is available to parents of pre-school children and to pupils in mainstream schools in the BELB area.

[www.oakwoodasd.ik.org](http://www.oakwoodasd.ik.org)

## Credits

- 'Signposts'  
SESS  
[www.sess.ie](http://www.sess.ie)
- 'Good Practice Guidelines for Schools to meet the special educational needs of pupils at the school-based stages of the code of practice'  
Inter-board Guidance (2009)
- 'Provisional Criteria for initiating statutory assessments of special educational need and for making statements of special educational need'  
Inter-board Guidance (2009)

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## ICT for Inclusion

*"Children are highly motivated by using ICT and when they are motivated we can better support their learning. But not everyone learns or works in the same way or at the same pace; if it is to be useful, technology needs to offer support for pupils with differing physical and sensory abilities and a wide range of learning styles."*

NOF ICTS Module 2

Knowing how to provide suitable software and assistive technology puts teachers in a better position to meet the learning needs of all children.

To address Inclusion it is important to provide computer time as an integral part of a child's daily routine. This is preferable to simply earning time as a reward for good behaviour. The benefits are enormous when the technology helps a child to concentrate and learn. Here we present some ideas to better inform teachers on using ICT for Inclusion.

In this chapter we focus on 5 areas

1. Assistive technology
2. ICT in the curriculum for Inclusion
3. Focus on provision for Northern Ireland schools including LearningNI
4. Further professional development
5. Curriculum Websites

### **1. Assistive Technology (AT)**

AT is used by anyone with a SEN or disability that makes 'standard use' difficult or uncomfortable. It's also often used by people simply because it makes using a computer easier or more comfortable.

It is the responsibility of each school to address accessibility needs for pupils. Your Education and Library Board has a policy regarding Assistive Technology for Pupils with SEN. Check with your Board for more information.

**Accessibility** settings on your computer allow you to make basic adaptations eg mouse pointer and speed, contrast, keyboard presses. **Start by making any changes by going to All Programmes – Accessibility Options.**

**Keyboards** Big keyboards, multi-coloured keys, keyguards, non standard keyboards including one handed are all available. In addition you can have an on-screen keyboard.

**Mouse** What if a pupil can't use a standard mouse? Try a rollerball, a touchpad or a joystick.. Download large cursors from Ace Centre – search for large pointers [www.ace-centre.org.uk](http://www.ace-centre.org.uk)

**Touch screens** can be used for children at an early level of development or those with physical challenges. Consider touch screens for learners who cannot manage a mouse for physical or cognitive reasons. Eg, For a range see Inclusive Technology <http://snipurl.com/1ysqnb>

**Tablet devices** which allow multiple touch are intuitive, fun and an increasing variety of educational applications have been developed. Consider if the child will ever need to learn to use a mouse because using a touch screen may delay the development of mouse skills. Examples include: Inclusive Slate, iPad, iPod Touch, Samsung Galaxy, Kindle and many other tablet devices. It is intended that personally owned devices will be able to have internet connection via the school network.

**Alternative Input** – Speech to text software eg Dragon Naturally Speaking, Windows 7 and Windows Vista permit text to be input by speaking into a headset. The software needs training to recognise your voice and a certain level of fluency and ability combined with persistence.

**Be aware that pupils may not wish to draw attention to themselves by using this software in class.** Read more at CallScotland

<http://snipurl.com/1ytuam>



**Speech Output** Many programs are enabled for speech feedback useful to users with Dyslexia or cognitive difficulties eg Texthelp Read and Write, Penfriend XP, Textease, Clicker5, WriteOnline, Writing with Symbols and the Communicate series from Widgit.

**Access Apps (Free)** consist of over 60 open source and freeware Windows applications which run from a USB stick. The software can change screen background to reduce glare, read text aloud, adjust screen settings etc. Pupils should be able to run this software on any C2k laptop where they have privileged user rights ...or on any personal computer. From rsc-ne-scotland.ac.uk <http://snipurl.com/1ytuvl>.

## **Visual Impairment (VI)**

Some key programs allow users with VI to access computers and the internet.

- **Zoomtext** See and hear everything on your screen
- **Kurzweil** makes printed and electronic text available via a scanner connected to the computer.
- **Jaws** is a screen reader for blind computer users. It provides access to software applications and the Internet. Jaws has an internal speech synthesiser and reads aloud information on the screen including system menus.
- These 3 titles are available to C2k school users.
- Please go to C2kexchange (Document A060) about getting the programs on your C2k computers
- Alternatively, **SuperNova** is used by some schools for screen magnification, speech and Braille support.

- The NI Regional VI Resource Base at Fortwilliam Centre has a remit for supporting the Boards to develop resources in appropriate formats to facilitate access to curriculum content for young people with a visual impairment. For more information please contact your local VI support teacher.

### Websites for Accessibility:

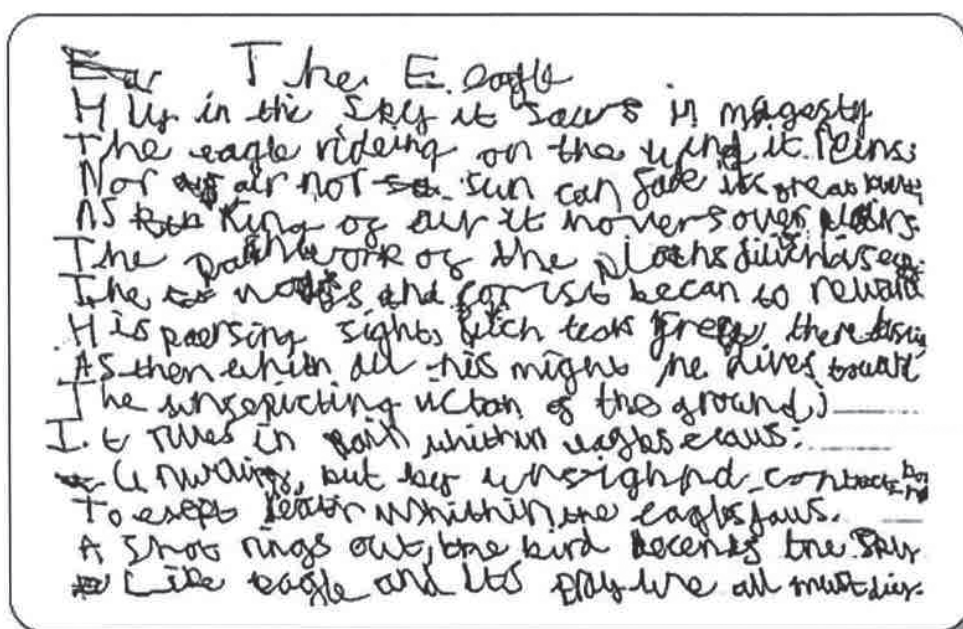
- Ability Net [www.abilitynet.org.uk](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk) Look on the LHS of the website for some examples of equipment that is commonly used for physical, sensory and reading and writing problems.
- Ace Centre <http://www.ace-centre.org.uk/index.cfm>  
Search for Introduction to Software
- Inclusive Technology [www.inclusive.co.uk/articles/](http://www.inclusive.co.uk/articles/)
- Accessibility for All:  
<http://www.rogerdarlington.co.uk/specialneeds.html>
- Better Living through Technology <http://www.bltt.org/>
- Make Word and PowerPoint more accessible  
(Regional Support Centre: Scotland North and East)  
<http://snipurl.com/1y5kz5>

## **2. ICT in the Curriculum**

Technology can offer exciting multimedia and interactive learning to children in your class, especially for those who need extra support for their learning. The visual, auditory and tactile feedback, along with the chance to embed skills through repetition, suits special learners including those on the Autistic Spectrum.

Adjustments and accessibility settings are often available in the background control menus of many educational programs. E.g. Blackcat software has a hidden teacher's menu accessible by pressing CTRL T.

**Learners with dyslexia** may need speech support for literacy activities eg talking books, spelling and phonic games and activities; talking word processors and on-screen word banks help to provide auditory repetition of text to support weak memory skills and increase independent learning.



**Text to speech software** to read text from any source eg Read and Write Gold, PenfriendXP, Textease, Clicker5, Writing with Symbols

**Talking word processors**, for users with VI, will read both computer commands and what is written eg Jaws, Zoomtext,

**Talking Books** <http://www.listening-books.org.uk>; Clicker5 and Microsoft PowerPoint can also be used to create talking books. These can also be used to create social stories <http://snipurl.com/1ysr0o> [[www.thegraycenter.org](http://www.thegraycenter.org)]

**Phonic and spelling games with sound** – there are many eg Wordshark, Numbershark

**On-screen word banks** eg Clicker5, PenfriendXP, Texthelp Read and Write are programmes which present word banks and in some cases predictive text.

**Wordbar** is a toolbar that works alongside a word processor. It contains editable grids containing words which, when clicked, provide speech feedback and send the words to the document.

**WriteOnline** is the online version which schools can licence on an annual basis.

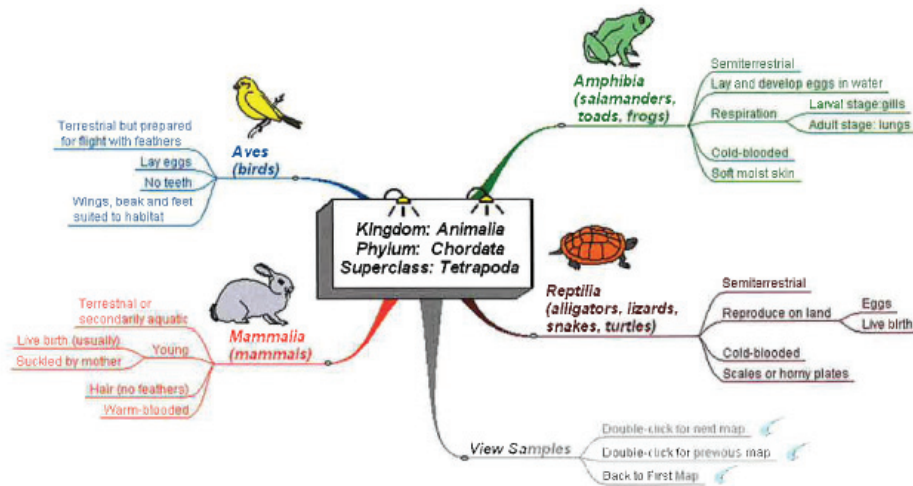
**Clicker5** provides a variety of grids and talking book options. You can make your own grids, add images, record sound into pages and create your own materials for your pupils. Register free and download hundreds of additional curriculum grids from <http://www.learninggrids.com>. (Mainly for Primary schools)

## Mind mapping

Mind maps, created by Tony Buzan, (<http://www.thinkbuzan.com>) use keywords to prompt memory and association, and encourage the use of colour and images. They can provide people, including those with dyslexia, a better way to organise and assimilate information. <http://snipurl.com/1y5o1o>

People use Mind Maps for

- **Planning** – projects, essays
- **Organising** – shopping lists, daily plans
- **Note taking** – lecture notes, capturing your next big ideas
- **Studying** – review and revise in preparation



Digital Mind Mapping tools are available free of charge and to purchase. Here is a selection in no particular order:

- Online thought bubbles [www.bubbl.us](http://www.bubbl.us) - basic version is free
- Freemind
- Mindfull
- CMaps (on C2k post primary LAN)
- Kidspiration
- Inspiration
- Mindjet

## New Technologies

Schools may wish to encourage parents to support their children by providing personal, portable touch devices. These can be used, for example, to support a pupil on the autistic spectrum by providing a portable visual schedule. They can be used as an alternative to a BigMac and can have some fun educational apps installed.

They could consider iPod, iPad, Nintendo DS (can record video), Android based tablets eg Samsung Galaxy Tab, Wii (good for coordination and physical development, Brain Gym, attention, turn taking, social and life skills). This mobile technology, which many pupils are already familiar with, is cool and motivating! Keep an eye out for new devices as this technology is rapidly developing.

### **Creativity through multimedia**

Consider the use of multimedia tools which appeal to the senses. Many children with learning difficulties are motivated by multi-sensory activities eg moving image, sound and interactivity.

#### **What do you already have in the classroom that could appeal and motivate?**

- **A digital camera** can record evidence, photographed by a child, without the need for written explanation – a picture paints 1000 words!
- **A voice recorder** – handheld recorder, mp3 player, ipod or a USB microphone. All ideal for capturing voice and podcasting.
- **A video camera** is worthwhile considering. It provides motivation whilst developing communication skills, planning and collaboration.  
You might consider something like a Flip Video camera with FlipShare software. There are similar USB video cameras which easily download the captured video to the computer via USB eg Digital Movie Creator.

**Just starting out?** Many digital still cameras can record short video, though not all have sound. This is a low cost introduction to start your pupils filming video clips. Use Movie Maker (PC) or iMovie (Mac) to edit.

### Benefits of using creative multimedia

- Watch Year 10 pupils speaking Spanish at boxoftricks.net  
<http://snipurl.com/1ytpq6>
- Top tools for digital creativity from helenabutterfield.net  
<http://snipurl.com/1ytrdh>
- An example of podcasting:  
<http://www.teachers.tv/videos/podcasting-in-the-classroom>

See also Section 3

### **3. Issues specifically for Northern Ireland schools**

#### **Inclusion Software available on C2k local network in schools.**

More information is in the Software Zone on

<https://www.c2kexchange.net>

- Texthelp! Read and Write
- PenfriendXP
- Clicker5
- Writing with Symbols
- Dyscalculia Screener
- Wordbar (post primary)
- Zoomtext
- Kurzweil
- Jaws

Connecting other computers to C2k Networks, provides information on attaching other computers to a school system in order to access the internet. The owners must agree to have their current anti virus software uninstalled and to accept a new anti virus product. The device must have a built-in network point. i.e not wireless <https://www.c2kexchange.net> . Helpsheet A097.

Future: New technologies and provisions which allow users to have an internet connection from their personal devices within school.

**MIS School management information software can help with the following:**

- Managing SEN Student Data
- Maintain your SEN register
- Manage and track SEN Reviews
- Record Provisions for SEN pupils
- Link SEN documents to the pupil record
- Record Agents and Agencies involved with the pupil
- In SIMS.net you can analyse progress using Assessment Manager and record behaviour issues
- Contact your local C2k team for more information (or search for SEN in C2kexchange)

**3a. LearningNI (LNI) is Northern Ireland schools regional learning platform – a secure online learning environment**

By setting up an All Courses space for your class you can:-

- Present interactive links and resources for pupils to access anytime anywhere.



- Improve motivation; reach all students; create groups for your class (and beyond) for focussed learning and collaboration.
- Add new social tools such as a blog or a wiki webpage for collaborative work - very motivating for pupils - it's the 21<sup>st</sup> century way to communicate!
- Add a Digital Dropbox (Protected Workspace) for pupils to upload finished homework.
- Child not at school? You can provide work in the learning space for 24 hour access.
- Get started by searching in Learning NI for the "course" entitled **LearningNI for All!** You will find examples and ideas to get you thinking about how to use a secure learning environment to support and enhance pupil learning, including those who need extra support. Contact C2k Curricular services for more information. 028 9027 9030.

In addition you can access licensed content and resources:

- **LearningNI Library:** Curriculum library contains thousands of resources; Staff Library; a chance to publish; Search – which can be used as a safe search by your pupils.
- **LearningNI Newsdesk:** a daily online news site with attention-grabbing news features linked to the curriculum. Access it by text or podcast. Send in your responses via Have Your Say or Be a Reporter. Suitable for KS2 and KS3 including learners with special needs.
- **Video on Demand** (available in all schools). Did you know you can access free educational videos with a YouTube feel? You may need to enable it via the Personalise window in LearningNI. You'll find videos categorised by Primary, Post Primary, Special

and CPD. Eg Look under the CPD tab for videos relating to managing behaviour.

Adults can publish videos and this area will grow as the NI community adds more content. Why not create a class video project and publish it here? If you find useful videos you can publish them here (as long as you have permission).

- **Video Conferencing** Is a pupil unable to make it to school? Is bad weather affecting pupil attendance? You can keep in touch by video conference to support an LNI course (group) area. This is ideal for transitioning to a new school, Area Learning Partnerships and SENCOs. All schools have the facility to use video conferencing (provided by C2k). Find out more at Virtual Classroom  
[https://www.c2kexchange.net/c2k\\_services.html](https://www.c2kexchange.net/c2k_services.html)

**A note of caution! Not all teachers or pupils may enjoy using the technology therefore appropriate training for staff and pupils is essential.**

#### 4. Further Professional Development

- **The Capacity Building handbook** and other professional development material is available digitally from **LearningNI library > Staff > Capacity Building for Inclusion**. You may search by sub topic for specific content.
- How to help **a child with Visual impairment** from Inclusive Consortium Training Syndicate. Click below to learn how basic ICT can help pupils with a visual impairment. In most cases the pupils will be accessing exactly the same curriculum as their peers, but will need to make extra use of technology.  
<http://snipurl.com/1xtjo9>
- **This VI unit considers different media** (visual, auditory and tactile) and different technologies which pupils can use

for independent study. From Inclusive Consortium Training Syndicate. <http://snipurl.com/1xtk2n>

- **RNIB for mainstream schools** offers support and advice for teachers based on real-life examples and including early years, developing social skills, curriculum subjects and research. <http://snipurl.com/1xtbgw>
- Inclusive Consortium Training Syndicate (**ICTS**) **training units for SLD teachers** – written in 2000. However the general content is excellent and will provide information and know-how for any teacher who has a pupil with severe disabilities. Well worth exploring! <http://snipurl.com/1xt0sa>

The following programmes may be available in the LearningNI Staff Library> Capacity Building for Inclusion. DE will alert all schools when the materials are available. In the meantime they can be accessed through National Strategies.

- **Inclusion Development programme,** <http://snipurl.com/1xt0ws> from National Strategies DCSF England, is designed to increase the confidence and expertise of mainstream practitioners in meeting high incidence of SEN in mainstream settings and schools.

Contains teaching and learning resources, training materials, guidance on effective classroom strategies ,models of good practice for multi-disciplinary teams, information about sources of more specialist advice.

- It is free to sign up for these reflective self-study modules:
  - ▶ Dyslexia and speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). <http://snipurl.com/1xt306>
  - ▶ Supporting pupils on the autism spectrum. <http://snipurl.com/1xt3cr>



- Doorway Online is a collection of free learning activities originally developed with funding from Scottish Borders Council. The suite comprises highly accessible educational activities that learners will find easy to use independently.  
<http://www.doorwayonline.org.uk/>
- Emotions colourwheel from Do2learn.  
<http://snipurl.com/1xt1be>
- Educational Games from Woodlands Junior School Kent:  
<http://snipurl.com/1xt1k3>
- SEN Teacher provides cost-free teaching & learning resources for students with special needs and learning disabilities.  
<http://www.senteacher.org/>

# Acknowledgements

Mrs Norma Perceval-Price



## Individual Education Plans (IEP)



Department of  
**Education**

[www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)

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## Individual Education Plans: Charting the Future

*The goal for inclusive education is to widen access to education and to promote full participation and opportunities for all learners vulnerable to exclusion to realize their potential.<sup>1</sup>*

Notwithstanding the introduction of the Code of Practice and the guidance on drawing up Individualised Education Plans (IEPs), pupils with special educational needs remain the most vulnerable pupils in the education system. IEPs which were designed to bridge the gap between educational success and low and underachievement through curriculum access, have been developed too narrowly and in isolation to the wider understanding of pupils' learning styles and preference and educational interests and engagement. The standards achieved by these pupils remain largely unchanged as evidenced by the poor levels of literacy and numeracy of a minority of pupils identified nationally and in the Chief Inspector's report (2008-2010).

Evaluation of IEPs in schools may lack rigour and reflection. Teachers vary in the number of IEPs they prepare over the year, over the format and content, and significantly, struggle to identify appropriate targets particularly at the post-primary level. Too much reliance is placed on commercially prepared IEPs and undue similarity and rewording is evident from one to another. At their best, IEPs are understood by all staff, parents and pupils and are used actively to inform lessons and assist evaluation. Classroom assistants are frequently deployed to assist a pupil to achieve set targets and, at times, relied on as the sole intervention. Too often IEPs are completed for the sake of meeting a policy requirement, short term, subject based and lack measureable outcomes.

***Charting the future of IEPs must begin with a clear definition of what IEPs are expected to do.***

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<sup>1</sup> Key Principles for Promoting Quality in Inclusive Education. European Agency for Development in Special needs Education, 2010

To be clear, the intention of the IEP is to build access to the curriculum for the pupil. In most schools this has been interpreted to mean a separation of the curriculum content into small chunks for the pupils to follow. This suggests that such action will enable the pupil to engage with the curriculum and make progress. Nothing could be further from the truth; teachers are already clearly able to do this without an IEP and plan for class lessons by knowing what each pupil can achieve. Teaching notes are the place where such curriculum differentiation should be written and followed; surely at post-primary level the course curriculum directs the content anyway. What is needed is a learning plan to ensure pupils engage with the curriculum and learn.

***Dividing the content of the curriculum into small chunks does not constitute an IEP: targets which state what has to be learned undermine quality curriculum planning and differentiation.***

Schools and classroom, by their very nature, promote learning in social settings: individual study, paired working, small group activity and whole class participation. Meeting the needs of pupils who find learning difficult or learn differently or who are challenged by the climate of the school and classroom, cannot be solved simply by writing an IEP which does not address the social setting of a school and the significance of learning in the company of peers.

***The preoccupation with academic learning without due consideration of the pastoral and emotional wellbeing of the pupil may improve learning but will do little to encourage the pupil to develop the skills needed to become an independent learner with the capacity to work alone, with a partner or as a member of a larger group.***

A further preoccupation is with literacy and numeracy as the only elements of the IEP. While raising a pupil's level of literacy and numeracy is of central importance, the IEP is not a check list of things the pupil has to learn such as a frequent word list, key words and subject specific words. This word bank approach has wrongly led teachers and, particularly post primary subject teachers, to regard the IEP as a record of the capacity of the pupil to increase the number of words s/he can spell and write. In other instances, teachers regard literacy and numeracy as the domain of the SENCO or the English or

mathematics teacher. As a result, withdrawal is seen as the catch up time when words can be drilled home and understood. Such activity may have a place in providing individualized support but it does not constitute by any means the answer to the IEP.

***IEPs are not checklists: increasing a pupil's vocabulary does not ensure s/he will use or apply him/herself to a learning task or take an interest in the curriculum***

Across schools there is variation in the degree of involvement of the pupil in the IEP process. Pupils, in growing numbers it must be said, are able to name their IEP targets; most can tell what targets they have achieved and how these are helping them in class but few are encouraged to identify the targets they would like to achieve over the longer term.

***Involving the pupils in the IEP process is more than telling him/her what should be learned.***

What is required is a new approach which challenges the huge emphasis placed on outcomes and endless re-writing of targets in different words or styles. The use of IEPs in isolation to the motivating experience and enjoyment of a lesson activity cannot be productive. Schools need to exploit their professional capacity to identify individual needs and decide what action will lead to improving the pupil's ability to learn and to do so alongside others in a mutually respectful manner. We have heard of the term removing the barriers to learning ...the perfect IEP should state how.

***Focusing on finding out how a pupil learns and securing his/her sense of wellbeing should promote the IEP more effectively.***

What this guide suggests is a long forgotten, yet seasoned maxim, which places teaching at the heart of learning and redefines the IEP as a practical framework capable of identifying and tracking a pupil's level of understanding and participation in the learning process. In this effort, achievements and standards are less likely to be contrived and more likely to be mutually appreciated between teacher and pupil.

### Has the IEP reached its sell-by date?

In its present form, the IEP is a distraction to effective teaching but pupils still need individual help and support. So much confusion surrounds the IEP and under the review of special educational needs it is clear that schools need to revisit the concept. The heart of raising standards is to bring back the importance of the teaching experience from which genuine outcomes flow. A plea for structured but imaginative lessons of a very good or outstanding quality is the essential ingredient in keeping the pupils in learning mode and ensuring purposeful learning.

*A focus on outcomes without consideration of the learning experiences of an effective lesson does little to consolidate and generate learning interest.*

### Is the IEP a stand alone document?

No longer should this be the case...individualised support and learning in the form of a learning support framework is more appropriate. IEPs are not static, improvement begins as the pupil enters the school building: ambience, working relationships, security and confidence in what is ahead does much to make the environment a seat of learning acceptable to the pupil.

*Whole school thinking securing an inclusive ethos must be actively developed and respected by staff and pupils alike.*

*IEPs must be a part of, and not apart from, the heart of a school's inclusive approach to learning and achievement.*

## **What then is the learning framework or policy which can positively promote learning for all and focus on removing the barriers to achievement and social and personal confidence?**

Answering this question should be the more important item on the school's agenda as it is from this point that standards for all will improve.

### **The Rules for Developing a Learning Policy or Framework**

*The promotion of positive attitudes in education is crucial for widening participation.<sup>1</sup>*

Planning to meet needs or address the variety of learning styles and capabilities in a school can begin with a clear understanding and agreement on the procedures and rationale on which provision is identified and deployed.

**Rule 1:-** *Defining the policy of the school as an inclusive learning and social environment requires leadership and vision, active professional discussion and debate about what constitutes SEN and what is meant by intervention: a policy of Inclusive learning.*

The process of individual planning is just that a process: the removal of learning barriers is essential to the process and should be anchored by a comprehensive diagnostic assessment of a pupil's primary learning modes.

**Rule 2:-** *Baseline assessment is the first element of the learning framework.*

*A view of learning as process- not content based- and a main goal for all learners being the development of learning to learn skills, not just subject knowledge<sup>1</sup>*

Baseline assessment must also identify the social and behavioural well being of the pupil. Observation and collation of evidence from a variety of sources is one way of establishing the range of barriers to address at a whole school and classroom level.

**Baseline assessment key questions:**

- i. How does the pupil learn?
- ii. What has the pupil already learned as shown by his literacy and numeracy performance and education history?
- iii. What is the pupil's learning behaviour in class, during lessons and across subjects?
- iv. What evidence is there to indicate the pupil's level of confidence as a learner and capacity to learn alongside others both collaboratively and in competitive modes.

**Capacity building:**

- i. Whole school awareness training and policy understanding of learning.
- ii. Learning manager training for the SENCO or senior staff.
- iii. Professional involvement of allied professionals eg educational psychology/social services.
- iv. Working links with feeder (pre-) schools and parents/carers.

*Training for inclusion involves the acquisition of knowledge and skills in differentiation and meeting diverse needs that allows a teacher to support individual learning in classrooms.<sup>1</sup>*

**Rule 3:**        *Establish a learning profile for the pupil based on assessment and collated information.*

*Teacher assessment that supports learning and does not label or lead to negative consequences for learners. Assessment should take a holistic/ecological view that considers academic, social and emotional aspects of learning and clearly informs next steps in the learning process.<sup>1</sup>*

Discussion of the pupil's learning performance among key staff, including assistants, will promote the importance of shared responsibility and accountability. Meetings to do this should be formalized and regular to build into the assessment action a sense of collective interest and sharp focus on how best to plan the teaching input and measure the impact of the intervention and the quality of teaching.

**Rule 4:**        *Identify the pupil's strengths and areas for improvement in literacy and numeracy and set targets as skills to be developed to enable the pupil to engage effectively with learning.*

In meeting this commitment, it is essential that the learning manager/SENCO is competent and skilled in the area of assessment and profiling, particularly if the pupil displays complex learning and/or poor social confidence and experiences. Collaborating to decide on effective teaching approaches based on alternative routes to learning highlights the flexibility needed to meet individual needs. This approach ensures that the IEP is integral to the classroom curriculum and whole school inclusion policy. This action may require flexible rates of time and content to enable pupils to complete given tasks. The ultimate aim is to reduce the gaps between the pupil with SEN and his/her peers.

#### **Capacity building:**

- i. Whole school training in collaborative working and case conferencing.
- ii. Whole school screening for literacy and numeracy.

- iii. Learning manager/SENCO specialised training in diagnostic testing and interpretation of results

**Rule 5:** *Include a descriptor of the pupil's social and behavioural competences in the IEP which can be tracked in the work of the school and across learning activities.*

*Collaborative problem solving involving systematic approaches to positive classroom management*

Much work has been done by schools to create an ethos of pastoral care and child protection. When applied to social and behavioural competences, this means the provision of a rich learning and welcoming curriculum environment that fosters the

interdependent strands of assessment, high-quality teaching, personalised learning and transition pathways.

**Capacity building:**

- i. Staff awareness training in understanding and recognising social, emotional and behaviour variations;
- ii. Access to counselling and mentoring support, including peer tutoring training for nominated pupils.

**Post-primary specific: Write learning guidance for subject teachers to ensure continuity and cohesion across classes**

Inclusive learning and classroom practice improves the attention and concentration of learners through the sharing of common tasks. In this instance, assessment enables learning and avoids emphasis on the weakness or deficiencies of poor performance. This is also key to promoting pastoral wellbeing and esteem. Through collaborative working the positive aspects of learning are consistently applied across



all classes and subjects. Such consistency provides a secure sense of belonging and lessens the likelihood of challenge and misbehaviour.

**Rule 6: *Involve the pupil in the learning process***

*Co-operative learning where learners help each other in different ways – including peer tutoring – within flexible and well-thought out learner groupings*

Examples of older pupils helping young pupils are quite frequent in the primary schools and study monitors in the post primary sector is a growing strategy to inclusive learning. Efforts to include all pupils in extra curricular activities, such as after schools clubs, are a further example of the inclusive ethos of a school in practice. All pupils should recognize their learning strengths and weakness and teaching approaches should be explored to enable pupils to realize the importance of developing their learning skills. This is particularly so in mathematics where the teacher has the opportunity to generate and probe the pupils understanding of the variety of ways to solve a problem. Support for a pupil struggling with number for example, is not improved through more drill and repetitive work sheet tasks. Obliging the pupils to share how they think and solve learning tasks will do more to build the mathematical skills for learning and learning application.

**Capacity building:**

- i. Raise staff awareness of education as a social process which promotes diversity and underlines support as guidance and acceptable and not as a deficit approach which can segregate one pupil from another

**Rule 6: *Establish a system for recording and reporting progress to staff, pupils, parents and carers.***

There is a tendency by teachers to write and record in a style which is meaningful to them. Often scrutiny of notes and recording systems is time consuming and cumbersome. Effort is needed to promote a common format of

recording and reporting in a way which can communicate and inform easily and with little doubt as to progress and practice.

Ways for engaging schools, teachers and the wider community in the processes of common recording and reporting would promote further the transition process and area learning co-operation.

***Rule 7: Evaluate individual progress against baseline assessment and specifically in literacy and numeracy.***

It is important to measure the progress each pupil makes in literacy and numeracy and the extent to which s/he uses their learning across the curriculum. Equally important is the evaluation of how well the pupil feels safe and secure in the school and develops the social and emotional competence to plan their careers pathway with confidence and purpose.

***Rule 8: Case conference and annual review discussion of progress to inform further work and to celebrate progress.***

Case conferencing and annual review procedures are a method of ensuring targets are prioritized and constantly evaluated. The involvement of a group of professionals promotes the sharing of responsibility and accountability. This approach also provides a professional forum for group evaluation of the intervention provision and is focused on changing assessment from a deficit to a guidance and support model where a competence based- approach maintains the learning support input as a process and not an event. Thus pupils who are registered on the SEN register should only remain registered when the assessment process cannot identify a learning pathway which can ensure inclusion and learning progress. In such an approach, the SEN register should be more fluid and less stigmatizing.

#### **Capacity building:**

- i. Staff training in participating in case conferencing and learning from other professionals

- ii. Learning manager/SENCO training in managing the SEN register

***Rule 9: Whole school analysis of data to inform policy and practice***

Developing a set of indicators as benchmarks of effective practice enables teachers to improve their working approaches through audit and data comparison. The SEN Indicators included in this booklet are a tool to help schools baseline their provision and focus on the process of improvement. Collating and analysing data enhances this process and measures the impact of the interventions against long term outcomes and targets. The process also enables senior learning managers /SENCOs to evaluate the extent to which the school has developed its inclusive learning practices. The analysis should also inform what individual pupils need to learn and how best they can learn it. Focusing on what is appropriate data is indispensable to dealing with the holistic needs of pupils and should not be confused solely with academic progress.

**Capacity building:**

- i. Staff development in recording data for retrieval and analysis.
- ii. Senior staff training in data analysis and interpretation

***Rule 10: Informing the Learning Framework***

An important consideration emerging from the Learning Framework is that annual review of the learning and teaching support for SEN should be a central aspect of staff development. Effective evaluation should contribute to the school's culture of inclusive working and help narrow the gap in achievement between pupils with SEN and their peers.

## Summarising the Learning Framework

*The IEP within the described framework is a planning, teaching, reviewing tool, which includes two parts;*

- Part 1 - a learning profile of the pupil detailing generic learning strategies to underpin planning for all lessons and indicators to ensure the pupil's effective inclusion in the learning environment: a generic and personalized learning planner;
- Part 2 - a document with literacy and numeracy specific targets linked to the overall skills needed to enable the pupil to access the wider curriculum;
- a working document for teaching staff;
- a document guided/underpinned by an overarching long term aim, with specified levels of attainment and at post primary level accreditation;
- a document guided by pupil profiles/records/baseline entry level assessment/a pupil's particular needs and strengths/a statement of SEN if applicable;
- a jargon free document which may be key stage and age consistent;
- a document a pupil can use to monitor his/her progress.

### When should you expect to see an IEP?

- when a pupil's learning is not ensured by current classroom strategies;
- when a pupil is on SEN register at stage 2/3/4/5 of the code of practice; and

- when baseline assessment indicates the need for one.

Baseline assessment should indicate the learning styles of all pupils and more specially those pupils who learning types are different and require careful and additional consideration.

### What are the management issues?

- All IEP targets should be achievable for both the pupil and the teacher;
- the IEP must be considered in the context of the overall class management of all pupils and staff;
- time allocated for delivery of the IEP should be integral to classroom and curriculum planning;
- regular periods of time for work with the pupil or for the pupil to work at targets should be recorded in the daily or weekly lesson plans;
- all staff coming into contact with the pupil should be aware of the IEP;
- the IEP should so far as possible provide access to the curriculum the pupil is following; and
- the IEP should arise from the school's overall inclusion practices and system of assessment and evaluation of learning progress.

### Evaluating and Reviewing IEPs

- IEPs should be under continual review;
- the frequency with which the IEP is updated will depend on the pupils achievement academically and socially, how quickly

targets are achieved against the baseline assessment and progress toward the long term aims set;

- IEPs should be reviewed specifically to inform the annual review process or to evaluate the impact of the support/intervention provision;
- parents views should be sought(at least one review should coincide with annual parents night); and
- when possible pupils should be involved in target setting and review.

**Finally ask where your school is in relation to:**

UNESCO's definition of inclusion from 2005 onwards

*"Inclusion is a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education.*

*It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children."*

*The IEP is an essential facilitator of this process.*

## Acknowledgements

Dr John Hunter





# Irish Medium Education & Special Educational Needs



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**Education**

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## SEN in Irish Medium Education (IME)

Children in IME schools are the same as children in any other school, come from similar backgrounds, have similar likes and dislikes, have the same curriculum as any other child, and have similar needs, however IME practices immersion in the Irish language from beginning school until Year 3 when English is introduced.

### **Leading and Managing SEN in IME**

Providing effectively for all the children in school is fundamentally crucial in realising individual children's abilities. If a culture of success is not prevalent then some children will not succeed. Invariably, it will be the children with the most complex needs who suffer the most.

Schools can only develop a success culture if each and every partner is committed to it, including the governors, leaders, staff, parents and the children themselves. There is outstanding practice in schools that develop rounded, talented and confident citizens. Measures such as economic and social deprivation do not determine success in these schools. School leaders can embed a belief that schools can open doors to success instead of accepting that some children face insurmountable barriers.

#### ***The first barrier is in the mind.***

Leaders with highest expectations of their pupils coupled with a zealous commitment to success can move mountains, and bring about an atmosphere that the school community thrives on.

#### ***Focus on the doors to success not the barriers***

School leaders must plan methodically to set the agenda for success and should invest in their staff where this is needed. Teachers may need additional professional development to support effectively children with special educational needs. In building capacity for the full range of learning needs

within the school team, leaders can future proof the school. This means that all needs can be catered for through fluid, responsive and adaptive provision.

### *Strategic thinking*

Leaders must resource the SENCO. In doing so, the work the SENCO does with the staff, and with individual children and groups, influences all pupils. In enriching the school environment and in building the school's overall teaching capacity, teachers gain expertise in SEN, particularly in early identification of need, planning intervention, monitoring and evaluation. The SENCO becomes the active agent in creating success within the SEN plan and provision and is the key component in linking the effective school team.

### *Having an IEP is good, having a good IEP is brilliant.*

***You may wish to consider the previous section on IEPs.*** The IEP should not become the piece of paper filled in before the SENCO or Principal comes around. An IEP should work well for the teacher and the pupil by being specific and manageable. It needs to be evidenced by progression and it needs to be understood and useful to all. It needs to be reflected upon, changed if necessary and discussed regularly. There should be at least one detailed IEP at the beginning of the year, with targets set and reviewed at least twice a term.

School leaders should listen to any concerns their colleagues may have about a child. When a school leader timetables discussions every term, asking for qualitative and quantitative evidence of the children's progress, agreeing and authorising a timed response to children's needs, the very fabric of the school is permeated. It becomes the mission statement of the school and brings life to the ethos of the school.

The school's procedures must be manageable, and save time instead of consuming time. If the SENCO spends too long creating reports and gathering evidence, then the procedures become simply a bureaucratic task. Effective use of software, and teacher observations, used in a collective manner, can contribute greatly to the data required. Members of staff should accept that the collection and collation of data is the first step in the process. The second step

is the analytical element of the available data and the third step is the effective use of the data. Everyone has a role in this systematic process.

## **Operational element of SEN in Irish Medium Education.**

### **Identification**

Most IME schools have a very close working relationship with their local pre-school providers. This has many advantages and in terms of SEN, it means that teachers in the primary sector have at least a year, if not two, to work alongside their pre-school colleagues in early identification of need. When this practice is developed, it will further advance provision for children with additional need.

IME schools use a variety of means to identify underachievement and additional need, including initial teacher observation, MIST, BVPS, PiE, PiM, NFER, InCAS, AU, NRIT, reading assessments and spelling tests. SENCOs are becoming more adept at dyslexia screening, and recognising signs and symptoms of need.

One school reports that it requires the teachers to level children in each year group from P3-P7, this informs moderation, and adds to the knowledge base of the SENCO. It also focuses the teacher's mind in terms of individual and whole class progression.

One school has developed an amalgam of assessments that are carried out each year from P2 to monitor and track all pupils. As a consequence, the SENCO reports that progression can be seen as a direct result of the intervention which followed.

### **Use of data**

The effective use of data and assessment technologies reflects good practice in the IME sector, and in the most effective practice, IME schools have collated years of data and are using it effectively to monitor and track individual and groups of children. Such effective use of quantitative data has resulted in the

SENCO planning effective individual intervention strategies, and helps guide classroom practice.

### Intervention

Once an identification of need has been made, IME schools offer a variety of intervention strategies. Most commonly, schools offer withdrawal classes, cooperation with Outreach and Peripatetic Services, Occupational and Speech and Language therapists, Educational Psychologists, and the use of IEP's for in-class support. Schools vary in the amount of time they can give to the SENCO to support SEN within the school, commonly, IME schools have teaching SENCOs with limited opportunity for whole school work. Examples of good practice for SEN include team teaching, training parents/ classroom assistants in reading partnerships, employment of part time teachers or classroom assistants to support children with SEN.

Resources used to support children with SEN in IME include Literacy Activity Builder, Numeracy Activity Builder and Maths Catchup programme.

A range of these resources can be found in Comhad achmainne do scoileanna chun tacú le páistí le Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais.

## CASS Support for SEN in IME

The following resources are provided by the IME CASS team working from the BELB, NEELB, and WELB.

- 1 General handbook on Inclusive practices
- 2 Parental support
- 3 Pupils decoding skills
- 4 Bingo games
- 5 Have a go spelling support
- 6 Talking and listening support for parents
- 7 Reading
- 8 Writing
- 9 Positive Attitudes
- 10 Self learning

These resources were mostly created from University of First Age material, 'Learning How to Learn'.

The CASS Officers concur that the Reading Recovery methodology is most effective in providing for additional need, and teachers report that the phonics schemes are delivering positive results. They also report that teachers are using intervention materials produced by CCEA.

Copies of the above resources can be found in the IME Resource File for Children with Special Educational Needs.

## IME Case Studies

An IME Primary and Post Primary school were asked to reflect on their SEN provision.

### Primary school

#### Transitions in

- There should be assessment, planning and evaluation, both quantitative and qualitative, at every stage.

#### Transitions through

- Monitoring procedures to ensure the progression of children through the stages.

#### Identification

- Early intervention in Nursery setting
  - ▶ Use of data to assess and analysis pupils' needs on three levels:
    - Individual
    - Group
    - Whole Class
  - ▶ Use of data to inform planning -
    - Individual – I.E.P
    - Group - differentiation
    - Whole Class – focus



- ▶ The use of data to contribute to raising standards on a whole school level.
- ▶ Teacher / parent observation
- ▶ Formal testing
- ▶ Educational psychological testing
- ▶ Training on identification procedures

### Intervention

- Using assessment and observation to plan and implement intervention whether 1-1 sessions, Group support sessions or whole school support
- On-going follow-up classroom support
- Close and effective liaison between class teacher and support staff
- Team teaching with teacher and implementation of intervention strategies in class. [individual and group].
- The 4 'E's - early, effective, evaluated and expertise - needed to carry out intervention.

### Strategies

- Clear definition of responsibilities and role of all involved in promoting SEN in school.
- Strong leadership that promotes and champions SEN throughout the school.
- Detailed curriculum planning.
- Effective Timetabling – being creative with time and with the personnel that you have.
- Assessment calendar – developing an effective assessment calendar.

- I.E.P's – monitoring, evaluation and review procedures.
- Annual training and revision on the principles of the Code of practice.
- Creating and fostering effective partnerships.
- A range of effective strategies for children's learning and teacher's teaching.
- Effective methods for teaching children with dyslexia; innovative methodology and flexibility in the use of multi media assessment procedures.

### Obstacles/barriers to learning/progression

#### Child:

- Personality
- Loss of confidence
- Lack of home support
- Lack of praise
- Lack of social support
- Talents and interests ignored

#### Trends

- Using data from various forms of assessment both standardised and non-standardised to track and monitor pupils' progress.
- Using data to analysis trends in progress on 4 levels:
  - ▶ Individual – I.E.P
  - ▶ Group - differentiation

- ▶ Whole Class – focus
- ▶ Whole school level – raising standards
- Research, resources and renewal

#### **Professional Development and training:**

- In-service sessions within school: assessment methodology, effective strategies.
- Informing parents – initial consultation, regular contact.
- Training from outside agencies.
- Opportunities for lesson observations – dissemination of good practice.

#### **Partnership In Action:**

##### ***Parents:***

- Communication with parents – home/school communication procedures, for example home / school diary of support.
- Support resource for parents.

##### ***School staff and additional needs support:***

- Regular contact between class teacher and support staff.

##### ***Outside Support:***

- Strong partnership established between school and outside agencies, for example BELB, Peripatetic Service.

## Post Primary School

### Transitions in

Smooth transition from primary – secondary is crucial and most pupils take a term to find their feet in their new school. Children with additional learning needs need a great deal more support and can have a trying year. We interview the primary schools in May-June. We build up a profile of each child by speaking directly to principal/SENCO/P7 teacher. We bring the children to school in June to carry out PiE, PiM tests during an Induction Day where parents meet with tutors to relay relevant information. We then meet the children for taster days in August where they are put in small groups and work through a 3 day programme covering transition issues, healthy eating, friendship circles etc. By this stage, we have identified pupils who may need a little more support during Year 08 and they are assigned a buddy. A Prefect is assigned to each year 08 class so that they have a peer influence and someone else to support them. Class in most need of support is divided in 2 to allow for smaller pupil-teacher ratio. A core learning class, consisting of 6 pupils, learn 6 subjects in LSC.

### Transitions through the school

The SENCO will meet with the year head in May with relevant information to year group. The year head passes information on to form tutors. Buddy and prefect support continues from year 08-10. The school is initiating a mentoring system where members of staff are assigned to children through traffic light system on assessment manager (not yet in place). Statemented pupils have an annual review and the school is supported by the Transition officer in the BELB who begins planning for transition from school from year 10. Careers modules are done in each class.

**Identification.** There is a referral system in school; teachers refer and pupil's information is kept on database of special needs register. All pupils' information is stored in Leabhrán Eolais and each teacher is given this booklet which details additional learning needs in generic form, and specific needs of pupils. Learning support staff review IEPs.

**Intervention.** Additional adult assistance is available to a number of classes throughout the school. Whilst assistants may be attached to a particular child, we ask that they facilitate the learning of other children. Assistants are trained in reading support and courses on ASD / Asperger Syndrome. Once a child is placed on the special needs register, staff are asked to differentiate the support in class. There are 2.5 teachers in LSC and in addition to teaching English, Irish and Maths to large classes; they teach a redefined curriculum to the core learning team. Pupils with a recognised diagnosis of dyslexia also have an individual learning lesson with one of these teachers.

**Strategies.** Many of the traditional reports and sanctions do not suit our children as they have no positive focus. A very useful tool for us has been the target diary. Two realisable targets are given to pupils and they receive points per tick received. They have to report to the SENCO at the end of each day to review progress and they receive a great deal of encouragement. This creates a sense of self-belief that many of our students lack. Our LSC acts as a sanctuary to those students who cannot tolerate the social constraints of the school yard and they come here instead. We have board games, chess and Warhammer clubs where some children can enjoy a more settled and structured environment. This is a great comfort for them and boosts them for their afternoon lessons.

### Attainment

We are delighted with the progress of 85 pupils at GCSE, AS and A2. This is as a result of the reader support they receive in their examinations. We need to plan for greater expectation and success, earlier at KS3. We believe that many of our ASD children would not cope in any other environment other than this one, where success is measured in a child becoming settled and happy to be at school as much as it is in receiving A grades.

### Trends

**ASD:** A larger number of children have difficulties in coping in the whole school environment. The associated behavioural difficulties are becoming more

difficult to manage and we need to develop teachers' understanding of triggers and specific intervention strategies.

We need to develop a Social Skills Programme for pupils with ASD as this is as prevalent to their curriculum as individual subjects.

**Literacy/Numeracy support.** A bespoke service of in-house and peripatetic support must be advanced. We have an amalgam of students, some of whom have received excellent support interventions in primary schools, and most who have not. This makes for a very differentiated classroom, but also a confusing one for those children who are dealing with literacy/numeracy difficulties in both languages.

## Acknowledgements

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Máire Nic Sheáin

Mr Sean Mac Coraiah







# Physical Disability



Department of  
**Education**

[www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)

AN ROINN  
**Oideachais**

MÁNNYSTRIE O  
**Lear**



## Overview / Introduction

Physical disability is a generic term that encompasses a wide range of conditions. The condition may be congenital such as Spina Bifida, Muscular Dystrophy or Cerebral Palsy or be a condition acquired at any stage including post accident, tumour or stroke. A physical disability can be described as long term usually lasting a life time and is seldom static so changing needs should be revised often.

To allow young people with a disability to reach their full potential in the school of their choice, schools need to create an inclusive environment where every pupil is valued. A team approach, appropriate training and advice from both education and health professionals (occupational therapist, physiotherapists and speech and language) will provide a holistic approach to the inclusion of the pupil. Consider that it is often the environment and attitudes of others that disable young people more than their disability; a positive approach to their disability helps the young person reach their full potential.

### The School and Classroom Environment

- Obtain accurate and up to date information about the young person's physical condition and any associated learning needs.
- Adapt the layout of the classroom and equipment to enable the young person to maximise their independence and learning.
- Make optimal use of the young person's ability – if they have difficult recording look at the many aids available. Different sized keypads, predictive text software, various types of mouse.
- Most young people with a physical disability need specialised equipment to assist them - seating, height adjustable tables, computer adaptations and or software.

## Learning

- Be aware of any perceptual or motor ability difficulties that are associated with a specific condition.
- Positively reinforce the young person's efforts in learning tasks and activities.
- Develop and use teaching and learning material that is appropriate for the pupil – copy of class notes, prepared worksheets with diagrams ready to label.
- Break down verbal instructions into stages and highlight or cut information into chunks.
- Frequently check the young person's understanding of information.
- Mixed media presentation with the emphasis on visual and "hands on" kinaesthetic learning.
- Try and give as much attention to effort as to achievement.

## Independence and Daily Management

- Strong and clear communication links between teacher, SENco and classroom assistant are essential for an effective working relationship.
- All involved with young person should encourage independence and foster a positive can do attitude rather than a negative.
- Attention should be focussed on the young person's personal care and comfort – specialised seating, toileting, eating etc as advised by the appropriate health professionals.

## **Emotional Well Being and Social Inclusion**

- Consider the young persons point of view.
- Be aware of the needs and challenges of the young person, do not be pitying or patronising.
- Encourage opportunities to promote the social inclusion of the young person even if this has to be engineered.
- In school young people need to have positive experiences to develop self confidence and motivation and enhance self esteem - counselling may be beneficial in certain circumstances.
- See the young person before the disability.

### Links/Resources

Contact a Family – [www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)

Scope for information on Cerebral Palsy – [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk) and [www.hemihelp.org.uk](http://www.hemihelp.org.uk)

ASHBAH for information on Spina Bifida [www.asbah.org](http://www.asbah.org)

Information on Muscular Dystrophy [www.muscular dystrophy.org](http://www.muscular dystrophy.org)

General information on physical conditions – [www.bbc.co.uk/health/conditions](http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/conditions)

Counselling – School Counselling Services or appropriate Charity/  
Specialist Service

KIDS Team, Contact Youth, New Life Counselling, CAMHS, Mencap.  
Clinical Psychology Service.

Schools that specialise in teaching pupils with Physical Disabilities –  
Mitchell House Support services, Fleming Fulton School - Lilac Team

## Spina Bifida and/or Hydrocephalus

Spina Bifida is a neural tube defect in the development of the spinal column. It can cause minimal or complete paralysis of the spinal cord. About 80% of people with this condition also have hydrocephalus. Young people with hydrocephalus often have a shunt device, which diverts fluid, maintaining consistent drainage and prevention of compression in the brain tissue.

**It is important to note that medical treatment should be sought if a young person with a shunt shows signs of vomiting, headache or dizziness.**

### Top Tips

Young people's needs are individual, but some may require support in the following areas.

- When working on practical activities, verbal prompts to start work, support to organise materials and checklists can be helpful, as short term memory and sequential thinking skills may be limited.
- Pairing young people or working in small groups of no more than 4 can be quite effective. This system can also be extended to P.E. and help foster positive social relationships and active participation.
- Mobility: where aids or wheelchairs are used, consideration should be given to access and movement around the classroom. Where young people are wheelchair users interactions should take place at eyelevel.
- Co-ordination, perception and visual problems can cause learning delays in reading, writing and numeracy.
- Consider allowing the young person to audio record lessons and work on these later when not under pressure.
- If hand function is poor and handwriting is affected consider the use of freely flowing implements e.g. felt tip pens, soft pencils or seek the

advice of an occupational therapist, who could advise on touch screens or keyboards with large keys. Occupational therapists can also advise on adjustable desks and portable reading racks/easels.

- Teaching skills such as, skimming and scanning, how to use eye movements, focusing on set activities, increasing attention skills, practical sequential work and allowing adequate time to complete activities may be very important for some young people.
- Be conscious that some young people have difficulty with sensory information and may not react to extreme conditions e.g. heat/cold. So be wary of hot radiators/water and involvement in practical classes.
- Others will exhibit differences between the level of language use and the level of language understanding. It is easy to assume that an articulate young person has the same level of comprehension skills.

### Resources/Links

ASBAH – The Association of Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus

[www.asbah.org](http://www.asbah.org)

Special Education Support Service

[www.sess.ie](http://www.sess.ie)

Central Remedial Clinic, Ireland

[www.crc.ie](http://www.crc.ie)

Enable Ireland

[www.ensbleireland.ie](http://www.ensbleireland.ie)

## Muscular Dystrophy

Muscular Dystrophy is the overall name for a group of muscle disorders that cause progressive weakening of the body's muscles. The dystrophies are usually inherited. In some instances learning difficulties, epilepsy and eye abnormalities can be present. The most common muscular dystrophies are Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD), which affects mainly boys, and Myotonic Muscular Dystrophy, which can affect both sexes. The majority of boys with DMD will become full time wheel chair users by the age of ten. DMD is progressive and the abilities of the young person can deteriorate rapidly over their school years. This is a life limiting condition.

### Top Tips:

- Give the young person adequate time to complete tasks, taking into account that they will tire during the day.
- Think of the practicalities in the classroom. The floor areas need to be clutter free; a child with MD can trip and fall very easily. There also needs to be adequate space if the young person begins to use a wheelchair.
- The Occupational Therapist may recommend a height adjustable table that will "grow" with them. Everything on the table (e.g. pencil pot, scissors, work tray) needs to be within easy reach of the young person.
- If the young person also has learning needs, model every task clearly and give adequate thinking time.
- For writing/reading at their tables, the young person may benefit from a Dycem non slip mat.
- Avoid asking a young person with MD to sit on the floor (e.g. at story time, assembly etc). It can be extremely difficult for them to get back up and will tire them unnecessarily.



- Only a trained professional should ever pick up a young person with MD. If they fall over do not pick them up by lifting them under the arms or by the hands. This could cause a lot of muscle damage. A physiotherapist will be able to advise on the correct way to assist.
- The young person may need assistance with some fine motor activities such as cutting out. As time passes, they may need these sort of activities completed for them.
- As fine motor skills deteriorate the young person may need a roller ball mouse and an adapted computer keyboard (see link below).
- Many young people with MD can suffer from depression and self-esteem issues due to the implications of the condition i.e. losing the ability to do previously easy tasks. Consult with the parents, SENCO and the school counsellor (if present) to establish a holistic approach to this issue.

### Resources/Links:

Muscular Dystrophy Campaign: [www.muscular-dystrophy.org](http://www.muscular-dystrophy.org)

NHS Direct: [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)  
(Search for 'Muscular Dystrophy')

Dycem: [www.dycem.com](http://www.dycem.com)

Inclusive Technology: [www.inclusive.co.uk](http://www.inclusive.co.uk)  
(Adapted ICT equipment)

## Limb Abnormality

Limb deficiencies may be congenital or traumatic affecting one or more limbs.

**Congenital** abnormalities account for the majority of cases and deficiencies can be partial or total, affecting the whole limb, elbow, hand, leg or foot.

**Traumatic** abnormalities may occur at any stage and can be the result of illness or accident. The young person may suffer from self esteem difficulties that may require counselling/pastoral support – a useful classroom activity would be Circle Time.

**Upper Limb Abnormalities.** Affecting young person's arms and hands – most children function well and can hold or move objects even when parts of their arms and hands are missing or misshapen.

### Top Tips

- Let the young person experiment with various methods of holding pencils/pens/felt tipped pens i.e. holding pencil inside cuff of sleeve or at elbow joint.
- Use of Dycem (non slip mat) to hold books, pages or objects in place on desk.
- Trial various types of adapted scissors to suit the individual young person's needs e.g. Easy grip, Training, Spring Assisted, Mounted Table Top.
- Handouts of notes or cloze procedure exercises may be appropriate if handwriting is laborious.
- ICT adapted hardware may be explored if writing proves difficult e.g. Big Keys Keyboard, Keyguard, Roller Ball mouse, Big Mouse.
- In PE consider using different pieces of equipment e.g. chiffon scarves, Koosh balls etc for throwing and catching, a piece of guttering for rolling a ball in target games i.e. skittles.

## Lower Limb Abnormalities

Affecting young person's legs or feet – they may require adapted footwear, occasional or permanent use of a wheelchair. The young person may suffer from tiredness associated with increased effort to complete tasks.

### Top Tips

- Classroom furniture and protective equipment e.g. adjustable table, adapted seating (should be recommended by Occupational Therapist).
- PE lessons should be adapted to include the young person i.e. use of a gym ball, having a member of staff available assist in games including pushing the wheelchair while the young person concentrates on the upper body activity.
- Mobility in school – time given for young person to move safely from room to room (i.e. leaving classroom before peers).

### Resources/Links

The UK Limb Loss Information Centre  
[www.limblossinformationcentre.com](http://www.limblossinformationcentre.com)

The Murray Foundation  
[www.murray\\_foundation.org.uk](http://www.murray_foundation.org.uk)

The Meningitis Trust  
[www.meningitis-trust.org/meningitis-info](http://www.meningitis-trust.org/meningitis-info)

Inclusive Technology (Adapted ICT equipment)  
[www.inclusive.co.uk](http://www.inclusive.co.uk)

Dycem  
[www.dycem.com](http://www.dycem.com)

Rompa (complete resources guide classroom equipment)  
[www.rompa.com](http://www.rompa.com)

Anything Left Handed  
[www.anythinglefthanded.co.uk](http://www.anythinglefthanded.co.uk)

## Brittle Bone Disease

Brittle Bone Disease is a genetic inherited disorder which causes bones to break easily. It may affect stature, muscle tone and coordination. Breakages may occur during growth spurts and can happen with even the simplest of movements i.e. shutting the door or lifting an object off the floor. The young person may have to spend time in hospital, therefore it is important to liaise with parents and other carers to give continuity in education.

### Top Tips

- A medical Action Plan should be in place to provide a procedure for all staff to follow if a break occurs.
- It is likely that they have had many hand fractures, therefore allow the young person to experiment with different pencils/pens/felt tipped pens and various types of paper/individual whiteboards.
- The use of a writing wedge and Dycem (non slip mat) may achieve a more comfortable writing position.
- Handouts of notes may be appropriate as handwriting is likely to be slow and poorly formed.
- Daily use of ICT may include; computer keyboard, voice activated word processor, dictaphone.
- Flexible arrangements should be in place for break and lunch depending on the numbers of young people in various settings, e.g. indoor activities or secluded area in the playground.
- Most forms of PE are not suitable, swimming may be the exception (see advice from parents and medical personnel).
- Circle Time could be used to help reduce the young person's anxiety about their safety in the school environment.

## **Resources/Links**

SEN Teacher

[\(www.senteacher.org\)](http://www.senteacher.org)

Anything Left Handed

[\(www.anythinglefthanded.co.uk\)](http://www.anythinglefthanded.co.uk)

Brittle Bone Society

[\(www.brittlebone.org\)](http://www.brittlebone.org)

Inclusive Technology (Adapted ICT equipment)

[\(www.inclusive.co.uk\)](http://www.inclusive.co.uk)

Dycem

[\(www.dycem.com\)](http://www.dycem.com)

Rompa (complete resources guide classroom equipment)

[\(www.rompa.com\)](http://www.rompa.com)

## Acquired Brain Injury

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) is any injury that occurs to the brain at any stage of a child's life e.g. road traffic accident, falls, brain tumours, strokes and neurologically based diseases. Teaching a young person after ABI can be quite challenging as the effects of the injury can be subtle, hidden and diverse. A teacher will need to recognise that the educational needs of each young person are unique; physical ability and cognitive processes such as memory, concentration, reasoning and language can all be affected. Everyone involved with the young person needs to be aware of the considerable impact that ABI will have on social and emotional well being and every day behaviour. The consequences of ABI are regularly under-recognised and underestimated in the school environment.

### Top Tips:

- It is normal for young people with ABI to suffer from high levels of fatigue. This is not something that they can control so allowances must be made and a rest period may need to be included in the school day.
- Limit distractions and reduce the amount of information presented. Use visual cues, chunk work and give instructions in small steps.
- To encourage working memory provide a notebook for the young person to include- a daily timetable, notes regarding ongoing work and special things to remember. When teaching present information in a variety of ways and allow for repetition to reinforce learning.
- Allow extra time for the young person to process verbal or written information and, if appropriate, use a tape recorder, note taker or ICT software.
- Be conscious that the young person could have difficulty sequencing language and may need appropriate communication modelled. Developing language and social skills through role-play can benefit brain injured pupils.

- Present material within the young person's field of vision. Enlarge printed materials, reduce clutter on a page/worksheet and introduce cues such as highlighting, coloured dots and arrows to encourage tracking.
- Reasoning and problem solving are often affected so be aware of the young person's inflexibility and inability to alter plans. Help them to think about alternative solutions to problems, predict consequences and set personal targets.
- Inappropriate behaviour can sometimes present itself such as passivity, aggression, frustration, lack of inhibition and a sense of danger. Set out clear boundaries and teach routines, prepare the young person for any new situation and have an agreed behaviour management strategy throughout the school.
- Counselling may be considered for the young person, their family and even their peer group who all have to deal with the consequences of ABI. Consulting with health professionals such as physiotherapists, occupational or speech and language therapists etc who are involved with the immediate provisions, can often provide the most up to date information on the young person's circumstances and advice on any additional equipment to meet their physical needs.
- Strategies used in the classroom should be reviewed according to the changing needs of the pupil.

### Resources/Links

Acquire: [www.acquire.org.uk](http://www.acquire.org.uk)

Child Brain Injury Trust: [www.cbituk.org](http://www.cbituk.org)

Headway: [www.headway.org](http://www.headway.org)

Head Injury: [www.headinjury.com](http://www.headinjury.com)

The Children's Trust: [www.childrenstrust.org.uk](http://www.childrenstrust.org.uk)

## Cerebral Palsy

Cerebral Palsy (CP) occurs when there is damage or lack of development in the area of the brain which controls movement. The young person may be very unsteady and shaky, this is known as Ataxia. Cerebral Palsy may cause physical difficulties and poor social integration; there can be huge variations in any two young people with this condition.

### Types of CP:

- Hemiplegia – The left or right side of the body is affected.
- Diplegia – Both legs are affected – arms are affected to a lesser degree.
- Quadriplegia – Both arms and both legs are affected. Head and body control may also be poor.

### Top Tips

- Take into account their physical disability allow extra time for written and practical tasks.
- Give thinking time for the young person to process information.
- Some young people with CP have poor memories therefore provide them with opportunities to practice and reinforce their work.
- A coloured paper clip positioned on the page will indicate where they are working from.
- Chunky pencil/felt tipped pen (with grip) for writing and use of Dycem (non slip mat) to hold paper or books in place.
- ICT adapted hardware may be explored if writing proves difficult e.g. Big Keys Keyboard, Keyguard, Roller Ball mouse, Big Mouse.



- Adapted scissors i.e. Easy grip, Training, Spring Assisted, Mounted Table Top.
- The use of a writing wedge may help with distraction, poor concentration and better posture when writing or copying from the board.

### Resources/Links

SEN Teacher

[\(www.senteacher.org\)](http://www.senteacher.org)

Cedar Foundation

[\(www.cedar\\_foundation.org\)](http://www.cedar_foundation.org)

Anything Left Handed

[\(www.anythinglefthanded.co.uk\)](http://www.anythinglefthanded.co.uk)

Inclusive Technology (Adapted ICT equipment)

[\(www.inclusive.co.uk\)](http://www.inclusive.co.uk)

Dycem

[\(www.dycem.com\)](http://www.dycem.com)

Rompa (complete resources guide classroom equipment)

[\(www.rompa.com\)](http://www.rompa.com)

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the staff of **Fleming Fulton and Mitchell House Schools** for sharing their expertise and writing the above section.



## Sensory Difficulties, Visual & Auditory



Department of  
**Education**

[www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)

AN ROINN  
**Oideachais**

MÁNNYSTRIE O  
**Lear**



# Visual Impairment

## Introduction

Most pupils described as having visual impairment are partially sighted and can function in school with the assistance of low-vision aids. Those with deteriorating minimal residual vision or who are totally blind may need to read and write through the medium of Braille.

This is general guidance, every child with a visual impairment has unique needs and the teacher should always contact a Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired who will provide tailored advice to meet the pupil's individual needs arising from their visual impairment.

## Notes for Teachers in Mainstream Schools

These notes are intended to explain some basic facts about Visual Impairments (VI) and to indicate ways in which teachers may improve the help they give to pupils with a VI. The Advisory Teacher should be approached for more detailed advice and for information on sources of equipment.

All tasks involving reading and writing may take considerably longer for a pupil with a VI. Fatigue may reduce working efficiency over a long stretch of reading or writing.

Pupils with a Visual Impairment may:

- miss out on incidental learning;
- miss out on facial expressions and social cues;
- experience difficulty distinguishing fine detail;
- tire easily; and

- experience difficulty moving around environment.

To assist a pupil with Visual Impairment:

- use an appropriate font size and style;
- present resources on A4 paper;
- address pupil by name;
- ensure correct seating position;
- provide high contrasting resources;
- carefully control lighting; and
- allow extra time to complete reading and writing tasks.

### **Vision**

- There is a wide range of eye conditions and within each eye condition there will be many individual differences.
- Pupils with a VI should be encouraged to make use of any remaining residual vision.
- Many pupils with a VI are assisted by using some form of magnification. Low Vision Devices (LVDs) may include spectacles, handheld telescopes, binoculars, magnifiers and closed circuit televisions (CCTV).

## Making the Most of Vision

### Lighting

- Good lighting is essential, either the provision of a good even light throughout the room or placing the pupils with a VI in a suitable position.
- Some pupils may need their own adjustable desk lamp to provide a light source.
- Avoid glare, position the pupil away from direct sunlight.

### Viewing position

- Some pupils with a VI may need to hold material close to the eyes and should be allowed to do so.
- Viewing materials from an angle may benefit some pupils.
- A sloping reading stand, adjustable drawing board or typewriter copyholder may be useful.
- Encourage the pupil to make use of any LVDs provided

### Enlargement

- Large print books are available from a number of suppliers.
- Subject to copyright approval print materials may be enlarged.
- Care must be taken not to over-enlarge material as this may add to the pupils' difficulties.

- Enlarged diagrams may be confusing, redrawing in a simplified form may be more beneficial.

### **Clarity and contrast**

- Remember print density is as important as size.
- Good quality black felt-tip or roller-ball pens are best.
- Do not use glossy paper.
- Text overlaid on pictures may need to be retyped.
- Try to place articles used by pupils with a VI on a contrasting surface.

### **Classroom Management**

- Allow the pupil to adopt the position which allows the most efficient use of residual vision.
- Provide clearly lined, good quality paper.
- Encourage the pupil to write clearly and neatly.
- Printed letters are preferable to cursive script.
- Seat the pupils with a VI at the front of the class and allow them to walk up to the board to check information.
- Avoid glare across the board.
- Write using a clear print and leave adequate spacing.
- Read aloud what is written on the board and describe diagrams etc.



- Ensure boards maintain maximum contrast.
- If at all possible provide an individual copy of the information given on the board.
- Keep the pupil with a VI close at hand to provide individual attention.
- Provide individual notes, diagrams and equipment if possible.

### **Classroom Environment**

- Keep rooms free of clutter.
- Make sure corridors and stairways are adequately lit.
- Changes of level may need to be highlighted.
- Try to position wall displays at an appropriate height.
- Address the pupil with a VI by name rather than pointing.
- At all times give verbal descriptions of activities going on in the room.

### **Classroom support**

- Some pupils with a VI are provided with a classroom assistant.
- The assistant may be used to modify material and in situations where vision is essential for safety.
- Where possible this assistance should be indirect, care should be taken not to do all the work for the pupil, in order to promote independence.
- Planning, decision and where possible practical tasks should be undertaken by the pupil.

## Examinations

- Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidelines should be consulted for access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration, <http://www.jcq.org.uk>
- It should be the aim of everyone involved in the examination process to ensure that the pupil with a VI may demonstrate his/her level of ability without disadvantage.
- Care should be taken that examinations papers are suitably adapted: enlarged print, clear diagrams, written descriptions of primary source materials, etc.
- An additional time allowance may be required in many subjects to compensate for a slower reading speed.
- If possible, examinations should be taken without the intervention of a third party but if the use of a reader/amanuensis becomes necessary, careful thought should be given as to whom is a suitable person.
- Make sure that all examination and assessment bodies are notified well in advance to ensure any adaptations requested are provided.

## **Sensory Support Services**

The Outreach Service for the Visually Impaired at  
Jordanstown School, Jordanstown Schools.

Mrs M Shannon

Tel: 028 90863541

Regional Visual Impairment Resources Base,  
The Fortwilliam Centre, Belfast

Tel: 028 90564000

BELB

Peripatetic Support Service

Head of Service - Valerie Haugh

Tel: 028 90491058

NEELB

Teresa Degnan - Head of Audiology Service

Tel: 028 25662446

SEELB

The Sensory Impaired Service

Head of Service - Mrs Wendy Martin

Tel: 028 90491583

SELB

The Sensory Support Service.

This Service is led by Mary Shalley

Tel: 028 37512450

WELB

The 'Sensory Support Service -

Hearing Impairment/Vision Impairment' as appropriate

The Service is led by Carmel McCarron

Tel: 028 82246203

The officer with overall responsibility for the Service,  
is Margaret Mullan

Tel: 028 82411305

## Further Reading and Resources

Grogan, M. (2007) Partners in Education: A Handbook on Disability Awareness and Inclusive Practices for Students with Disabilities (2nd edn), Offaly: Offaly Centre for Independent Living.

Available from Michael Nestor, Offaly CIL  
email [oiicl@eircom.net](mailto:oiicl@eircom.net)

Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ):  
Access Arrangements, Reasonable  
Adjustments and Special Consideration  
General and Vocational Qualifications,  
2009. <http://www.jcq.org.uk>

National Blind Children's Society website:  
<http://www.nbcs.org.uk>

NCBI National Council for the Blind of  
Ireland, website: <http://www.ncbi.ie/>

Royal National Institute of Blind People, website: <http://www.rnib.org.uk/>



# Support Guidelines for the classroom assistant providing support for pupils with a visual impairment

## INTRODUCTION

The use of a classroom assistant to adapt and modify material and to provide assistance during lessons will be beneficial for those pupils with significant visual impairment.

A pupil who cannot see fully may not learn those things that fully sighted pupils pick up incidentally and may need more practice and support to master new skills and understand new concepts.

The pupil may need individual demonstration in tasks such as cutting out, letter formation, self help and organisational skills.

The pupil may need the opportunity to look at and discuss items to be used in lessons beforehand.

They may need assistance in using equipment and resources effectively.

Support on an individual basis should not be offered automatically but only as necessary. It may create over-dependence and prevent the pupil from working with their peers.

## EFFECTIVE SUPPORT

Encourage the pupil to:

- attend to the class teacher - careful listening is important to compensate for reduced visual intake;

- interact with the class teacher and their peers - allow them to be part of the class as much as possible;
- work unaided; and
- think, act and take responsibility for his or her own decisions and actions.

### **DIRECT SUPPORT**

The pupil with V.I. will receive restricted information. It is easy for them to lose the thread of the lesson. It is not always possible to talk them through things. A "chalk and talk" session by the teacher is a good example of direct support.

Be pro-active and try to familiarise them with the content of the lesson beforehand. We all function better when we can anticipate what is expected of us.

- It may be necessary to follow up and reinforce what the class teacher has been saying or demonstrating.
- Do not work for the pupil, over-correct or rewrite work out.
- In some situations it may be necessary for you to write material from the board. This should be done with the understanding that on most occasions the pupil then studies it and transfers it to their workbooks later themselves.
- Do not expect the pupil to copy everything from the board. It is sometimes more appropriate to present the work on paper and go through it with them to ensure full understanding.
- In some situations it is best to sit away from the board where you can reinforce the work discreetly. Increased verbal input will help compensate for limited visual information.

# Hearing Impairment

## Introduction

Deafness has a major effect on a child's ability to learn to communicate, read and write. A teacher's ability to communicate successfully with the deaf child in the classroom is crucial in minimising or reducing the barrier to learning. The majority of deaf children in the UK are educated in mainstream schools alongside their hearing peers, and some are often the only deaf child in their class, or even the whole school.

The majority of students with hearing loss in mainstream schools will have mild to moderate hearing loss and use oral/aural methods as their main mode of communication. However, an increasing number of students with severe to profound loss are now entering mainstream education and some of these students choose to use sign language as their preferred mode of communication.

Indicators of a hearing loss may include difficulties pronouncing some words or speech sounds, failure to pay attention when spoken to, frequent observation of peers for a lead as to what to do, giving incorrect answers to simple questions, a high frequency in asking for repetition of words and sentences, intense face and/or lip watching, mispronunciation of some words/sounds, straining to watch a speaker, a tendency to speak loudly and to have difficulty monitoring voice level, and withdrawal.

**Mildly Hard of Hearing:** the student hears nearly all speech but may hear incorrectly if not looking at the speaker or if there is background noise. It can be very difficult to identify this condition. Students may have difficulties responding to conversational speech especially with background noise.

**Moderately Hard of Hearing:** the student will experience difficulty hearing others speaking who are close by. The student may subconsciously augment his/her understanding with lip-reading and visual cues. It is difficult to identify the

student's hearing loss from his/her speaking voice, but on close examination the student misses word endings and omits definite and indefinite articles.

**Severely Hard of Hearing:** the student requires a hearing aid and needs to use lip-reading and body language to augment understanding. The student's speaking voice is characterised by shortened sentences.

**Profoundly Deaf:** the student may use a hearing aid but relies on visual cues and/or sign language to communicate. The student's speaking voice may seem incomprehensible but some students can achieve good oral skills. Radio aids may be used to transmit the speaker's voice to the listener.

The greatest difficulties faced by deaf students are in relation to language and communication. The acquisition of language and the development of a communication system are central to all aspects of learning and teaching for these students. The communication approach used by students is based on the student's own communication needs and parental preference.

Reproduced by kind permission of *SIGNPOSTS: A Resource Pack for Teachers Special Education Support Service*: (<http://www.sess.ie>) Department for Education and Skills.

The following guide has been developed for school staff and is recommended for planning and ensuring good practice for working with children and young people with a hearing impairment.

'The Deaf Friendly Schools: A Guide for Principals, Staff and Governors' was written by the National Deaf Children's Society and is available on the Department of Education website.

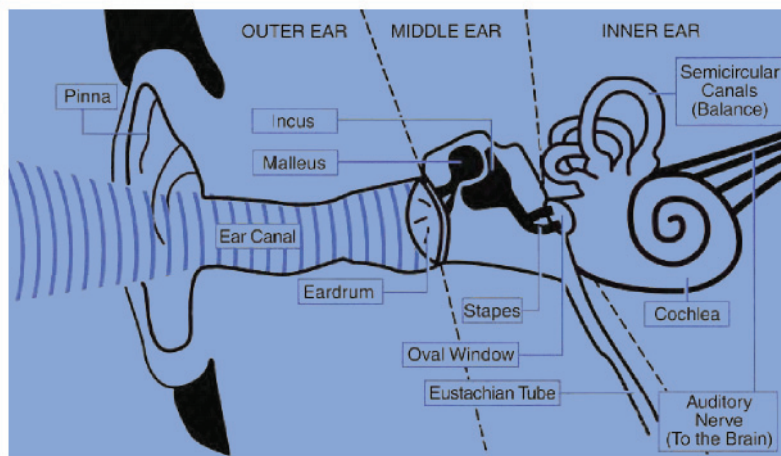
[www.deni.gov.uk/deaf\\_friendly\\_schools\\_guide.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/deaf_friendly_schools_guide.pdf)



## An Overview of Hearing Impairment

### How do we hear?

- outer ear
- middle ear
- inner ear



- conductive loss
- sensorineural loss
- mixed loss
- sensory loss
- neural loss

## Conductive Hearing Loss

### Congenital

- various inherited syndromes
- cystic fibrosis
- cleft palate

### Acquired

- glue ear
- infections
- trauma
- hardened wax
- foreign bodies

## Sensorineural Hearing Loss

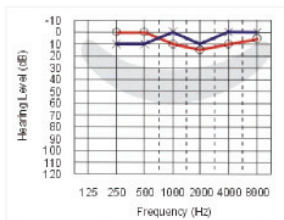
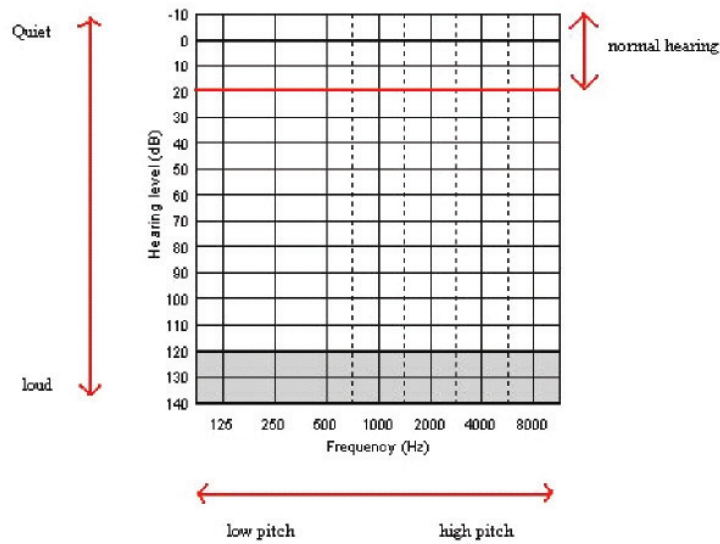
### Congenital

- various inherited syndromes
- maternal rubella
- premature/difficult birth
- rhesus incompatibility
- asphyxia

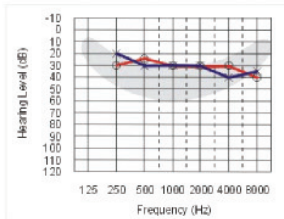
### Acquired

- meningitis
- trauma
- viral infections
- ototoxic drugs

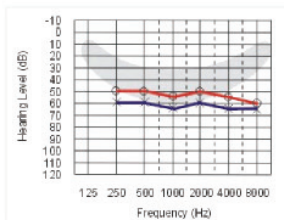
## A Blank Audiogram



This audiogram shows 'normal' hearing.  
 Sounds below the lines on the audiogram can be heard.  
 X shows the left ear.  
 O shows the right ear.  
 All the X and O are above the 20 line.



This audiogram shows a 'mild' hearing loss.  
 All the X and O are between the 21 and 40 lines.  
 Some difficulty with quiet speech.



This audiogram shows a 'moderate' hearing loss.  
 Frequent difficulty with normal speech  
 Loud sounds can be heard  
 All the X and O are between 41 and 70.



The following passages illustrate the impact of hearing loss on speech perception.

\_ a \_ \_ a \_ \_ i \_ \_  
\_ e \_ \_ u \_ \_ e \_ i \_ \_  
\_ o \_ e \_ \_ a \_ a i \_  
o \_ \_ a \_ e \_

J \_ c k \_ n d J \_ l l  
w \_ n t \_ p t h \_ h \_ l l  
t \_ f \_ t c h \_ p \_ \_ l  
\_ f w \_ t \_ r

Jack and Jill  
went up the hill  
to fetch a pail  
of water

Hearing Aid →



← FM System

Cochlear Implant →



## **FM Systems**

What is an FM System?

Why use an FM System?

When should you use an FM System?

How should you use an FM System?

### **Why use an FM System?**

An FM system will overcome the detrimental effects of the three main enemies of the hearing aid user: -

- 1. Distance**
- 2. Background Noise**
- 3. Reverberation**

<u>Source</u>	<u>60dBSPL</u>
1 foot away	54dBSPL
2 feet away	48dBSPL
4 feet away	42dBSPL

**As the distance from the source doubles  
the SPL falls by 6dB**

**Why is background noise in the classroom so  
devastating for the hearing impaired?**

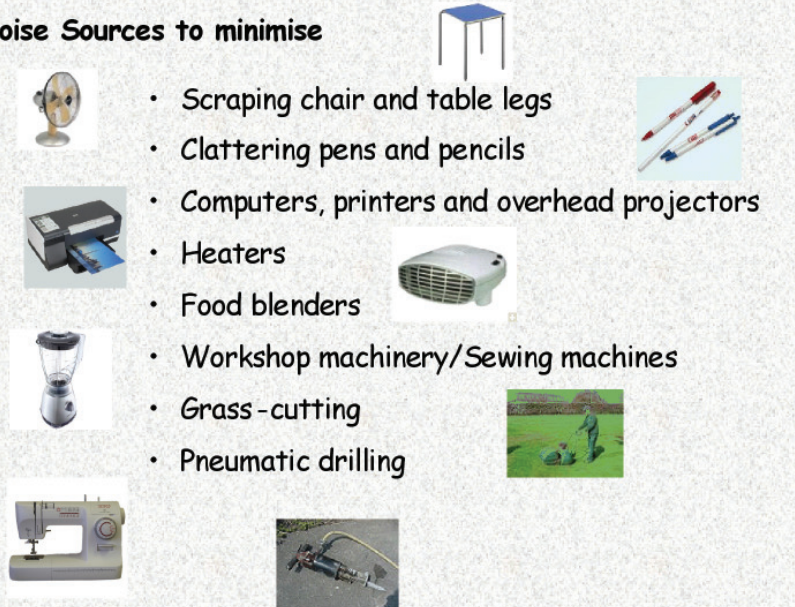
<u>speech level</u>	<u>background noise level</u>	<u>s/n</u>
65dB	45dB	+20dB
50dB	55dB	-5dB

**preferable s/n is between +20dB and +25dB**



**Noise Sources to minimise**

- Scraping chair and table legs
- Clattering pens and pencils
- Computers, printers and overhead projectors
- Heaters
- Food blenders
- Workshop machinery/Sewing machines
- Grass-cutting
- Pneumatic drilling



### When/How should you use an FM System?

An FM system is an example of technology which can greatly improve listening conditions for a hearing impaired pupil, however if it is not used correctly it cannot provide the expected benefits. Because the FM system is **dominant**, it must be used with discretion, switched on and off appropriately and NOT left constantly on.



## Daily Looking and Listening Checks



## Greatest impact of deafness is language development

- deaf child doesn't hear conversations around him
- doesn't hear enough to make sense of what is said
- misunderstands what has been said or written
- thinks he has understood but doesn't realise he has missed important information

- note-taking support
- additional explanation of subject matter  
before the lesson  
during the lesson
- additional follow-up work
- differentiated materials

- **attention**
- **repeat**
- **rephrase**
- **use open-ended questions**
- **use drama for concepts**
- **never talk to the whiteboard!!**
- **facial expressions**
- **body language**

- **DVDs**
- **Videos**
- **TV programmes**
- **ICT**
- **look at object/picture - give information**

Tips for teaching a hearing-impaired pupil in a mainstream classroom.

- seating
- your face/other pupils' faces
- your mouth
- light
- window
- exaggerated lip patterns

- pupil's disability
- clue
- taking notes
- comprehension/spelling/similar sounds
- concentration
- progress

- inclusive attitude to deaf child
- good role model
- explain things clearly
- appropriate expectations
- appropriate resources
- questioning

- good social interaction encouraged
- visits outside school

**FM system**

**safety of child**

- visitors in the classroom  
**made aware of potential difficulties**

Deafness is not defined as a **special educational need** but

a child may need special educational provision because of the needs which arise from his hearing impairment

- eg:
- speech and language therapy
  - specialist equipment
  - teacher of the deaf support
  - classroom assistant/LSA

### **The Role of a Classroom Assistant**

- pre tutor
- post tutor
- one-to-one support
- plan with teacher
- prepare modified language resources
- observe
- contribute to targets set
- act as a note -taker
- check equipment
- SLT exercises

## You are not alone!!!!!!

- Teacher of the Deaf
- SENCO
- colleagues
- child's parents





## Sensory Support Services

The Outreach Service for Auditory and Visual Impairment  
at Jordanstown Schools

Tel: 028 90863541

BELB

Peripatetic Support Service

Head of Service - Valerie Haugh

Tel: 028 90491058

NEELB Sensory Learning Support (SLS)

Teresa Degnan - Head of Audiology Service

Tel: 028 90863541

Tel: 028 25662446

SEELB

The Sensory Impaired Service

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The Service is led by Mary Shalley.

Tel: 028 37512450

WELB

The 'Sensory Support Service - Hearing Impairment/  
Vision Impairment' as appropriate

The Service is led by Carmel McCarron.

Tel: 028 82246203

The officer with overall responsibility for the Service, is  
Margaret Mullan.

Tel: 028 82411305

## **Additional References and Resources**

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, website:

<http://www.agbell.org/DesktopDefault.aspx>

British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD), website:

<http://www.batod.org.uk/>

British Deaf Association (BDA), website:

<http://www.britishdeafassociation.org.uk/>

Centre for Deaf Studies and Irish Deaf Online Directory, website:

<http://www.irishdeaf.com/>

The Deaf Friendly Schools: A Guide for Principals, Staff and Governors written by the National Deaf Children's Society, website:

[www.deni.gov.uk/deaf\\_friendly\\_schools\\_guide.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/deaf_friendly_schools_guide.pdf)

Deaf Hear (formerly the National Association for Deaf People), website:

<http://deafhear.ie/>

DELTA is a national charity supporting deaf children, their families and practitioners. Website: [www.deafeducation.org.uk/](http://www.deafeducation.org.uk/)

Ear Foundation: UK charity to support and to provide activities, courses and resources for deaf children, young people and adults with cochlear implants, their families and supporting professionals, website:

<http://www.earfoundation.org.uk/>

Forest Bookshop: information on books, DVDs, CD ROMs and software about sign language and Deaf issues, website:

<http://www.forestbooks.com/pages/>

Grogan, M. (2007) Partners in Education: A Handbook on Disability Awareness and Inclusive

Irish Deaf Society (IDS), website: <http://www.irishdeafociety.ie/>

NDCS: the national charity dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people. website: [www.ndcs.org.uk/](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/)

Jordanstown Schools: a school for children and young people with auditory and visual impairments; school profile and facilities with information about specialist support, events and photos. website:

[www.jordanstownschoools.co.uk](http://www.jordanstownschoools.co.uk)

National Deaf Children's Society (2001) Deaf Friendly Schools: A Guide for Teachers and Governors in England and Wales, London: The National Deaf Children's Society.

Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID), the charity represents the 9 million deaf and hard of hearing people in the UK. website: <http://www.rnid.org.uk/>

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the staff of the Jordanstown School for sharing their expertise and writing the above section.

We would like to thank the staff of the ELB Sensory Support Services, Department for Education and Skills, for their advice.

We would like to thank the Special Education Support Service for their permission to reproduce part of the 'Signposts' publications.



# Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties



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# Meeting the Needs of Pupils with Speech, Language and Communication Needs

## Introduction

As teachers we are aware of the importance of language both as a means of communication and a medium of instruction. Well established skills enable children to establish and maintain social relationships with others, to express and to share their thoughts and feelings, to represent and to understand the world around them. Language is also intricately connected to and contributes to the pupil's cognitive development, as well as their sense of identity and belonging.

Many pupils with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) can succeed in mainstream education, particularly where schools embrace collaborative working arrangements and teachers have access to the specialist training and resources they need.

This section provides an overview for teachers of the main types of speech and language difficulties that pupils may present with in mainstream schools along with brief examples as to how pupil needs can be met. It is of interest that the strategies suggested are not unique to pupils with speech and language difficulties. The same strategies go a long way to encouraging better classroom practice and teaching that are of benefit to all children's learning.

## What are Speech, Language and Communication?

Speech refers to:	Language refers to: speaking (expressive) and understanding language (receptive)	Communication refers to: how we interact with others (pragmatic/ social)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Saying sounds accurately and in the right places in words;</li> <li>○ The sounds people use to communicate words;</li> <li>○ Speaking fluently, without hesitating, or prolonging or repeating words or sounds; and</li> <li>○ Speaking with expression with a clear voice, using pitch, volume and intonation to support meaning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Using words to build up sentences, sentences to build up conversations and longer stretches of spoken language; and</li> <li>○ Understanding and making sense of what people say.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Using language to represent concepts and thoughts;</li> <li>○ Using language in different ways; to question, clarify, describe etc.;</li> <li>○ Non-verbal rules of communication; good listening, looking at people knowing how to talk to others and take turns, how to change language use to suit the situation or the person being spoken to;</li> <li>○ The ability to take into account other peoples' perspectives, intentions and the wider context; and</li> <li>○ Many pupils communicate successfully using non-verbal means such as signing, gestures, communication books or electronic communication equipment.</li> </ul>



Pupils may have receptive, expressive or global language disorders. Language disorders can result in poor self-confidence and low self-esteem, which can affect personal and social relationships.

Research indicates that pupils with more complex disorders have a greater likelihood of experiencing behavioural problems. Many pupils need to be directly taught the speech, language and social communication skills that other pupils learn naturally.

### Prevalence

The figures relating to the prevalence of language and communication difficulty vary. The Department of Education School Census 2009-2010 gives a total of 8,650 pupils identified with speech, language and communication difficulties. According to a report from Ireland (DES, 2005) research suggests that the figures range between 2 and 10 per cent. Accepting these figures, it may then be possible that as many as three children in a class of 30 may have difficulty in the area of language and communication.

**3 Pupils in a Class of 30**

## Overview

### Specific Speech and Language Impairment

Specific Speech and Language Impairment can be thought of in terms of pupils whose non-verbal ability is in the average band or higher and whose skill in understanding or expressing themselves through the medium of spoken language is severely impaired. (SERC, 1993)

### What are Speech, Language and Communication Needs?

This is a generic term that encompasses a large spectrum of language needs including: language delay and disorder.

#### Delay

This refers to pupils who may following normal developmental patterns but they will not be at the stage of language expected for their chronological age.

#### Disorder

This is where the pupil's speech and language skills are not developing in the way they develop for most children. A pupil with a speech disorder may make errors in pronouncing words, or may stutter. Acquisition may also be patchy, e.g. more difficult concepts may be understood while other basic concepts e.g. colour, size may not.

### Why is Language important?

The following points highlight why language is important:

- language enables us to make our needs, opinions and ideas known;

- language is important for cognitive development; without language we lack much of the raw material with which to reason and think;
- positive social interactions with other people are heavily dependent upon effective language and communication skills; and
- language is important for regulating our own behaviour and responses (self-talk).

(Westwood, 2003)

Language can be broken down into input (receptive) and output (expressive). A pupil with SLCN may present with difficulties in any or all of the areas of language, including morphology, syntax/grammar, semantics, pragmatics and phonology;

Language can also be thought of in terms of content, form and use.

**morphology    syntax    semantics    pragmatics    phonology**

- **Morphology** is the way word structures change (sleep, sleeping, slept).
- **Syntax** is the grammar system of a language - the way that words and parts of words combine in phrases and sentences.
- **Semantics** refers to the meaning of words, bits of words and phrases and sentences.
- **Pragmatics** can be thought of as how we use language in different situations and how we convey feelings.
- **Phonology** refers to the sounds that make up language.

## How to support a child with Speech Difficulties?

Teachers often struggle with how to meet pupil's needs despite being able to easily identify that the pupil has speech difficulties.

Pupil's difficulties in this area may either be **Phonological** or **Articulatory**.

### Phonological

This refers to a delayed or disordered sound system.

- Some pupils with speech difficulties may have problems with speech input e.g. differentiating between similar sounding words.
- Some may have imprecise or fuzzy storage of words which makes it difficult to access them e.g. word finding difficulties or to programme a clear production of them because of missing elements in the word store.

### Articulatory

This refers to the mechanics of speech, for example, how speech sounds are formed. Manifestations include dyspraxia, dysarthria or cleft lip and/or palate. They may have a difficulty pronouncing speech at an articulatory output level even though they know the words involved perfectly well.

With persisting difficulties there may be involvement with all aspects of processing and there may also be language difficulties. Although not all speech and language difficulties have associated literacy difficulties, many pupils whose speech difficulties persist beyond 5 years of age are most at risk for associated difficulties in reading, spelling and sometimes maths.

**Reading and writing float on a sea of talk**

( Britton, 1973)

### Teaching and Learning Strategies

Teachers should:

- become familiar with the pupil's sounds system and the substitutions they make;
- respond to what the pupil is saying as opposed to how clearly they speak;
- repeat the part of speech/conversation they did not understand;
- encourage the pupil to use gesture, drawing or writing to aid understanding;
- avoid asking for constant repetition of mispronounced words;
- make the pupil feel relaxed and build self-esteem and confidence;
- comment on and praise good interactions/speech;
- identify and praise pupil's other strengths;
- consider where in the 'queue' the pupil is asked to respond, somewhere near the beginning is preferable so they have been given a good model/example of an answer, avoid leaving the pupil to the end as memory skills may be affected;
- repeat what the child says correctly so that they hear the correct production;
- not ask the child to repeat again after you; and

- ask parents to use a home/school diary to give information on exciting things happening at home, this way the teacher will have context when asking the pupil questions.

## Receptive, Expressive and Pragmatic use of Language

### Receptive language skills

**[Receptive language skills] describe the ability to understand spoken language. They can also be referred to as 'verbal comprehension skills' and are essential for accessing the entire curriculum.**

(McMahon & Mulholland, 2007)

The following points are features of receptive language skills. Pupils may:

- have difficulty following class routines;
- find it hard to concentrate;
- over-rely on looking at others to copy what to do or may need more gestures to understand;
- have difficulty in understanding abstract concepts (impacting on learning areas especially Mathematics and Numeracy & World Around Us);
- need instructions repeated many times or require them to be broken down and simplified;
- give inappropriate answers to questions they have been asked;
- opt out of tasks or withdraw from activities they don't understand;

- echo what has been said to them (echolalia);
- find it hard to learn new vocabulary;
- give irrelevant or inappropriate answers as they have not understood the underlying meaning;
- fail to read facial expressions and invade other people's personal space;
- take things literally; and
- present with behavioural difficulties.

### **Strategies to Support Children with Receptive Language Difficulties**

The teacher should:

- have specific learning intentions which should be provided for the class;
- check that the pupil is listening and encourage active listening;
- state the pupil's name before giving an instruction or gain eye contact (if appropriate);
- use visual strategies and non-verbal cues to support what is being said;
- help the pupil to make links to previous knowledge and experiences
- emphasise key words with slight stress;

- think about the length of the instruction being given, it is useful to think in terms of whether it is a single or multi-command instruction, give one piece of instruction at a time to allow pupils to process this before adding more;
- consider the complexity of what is being said e.g. "before you go outside, you must finish your worksheet";
- check that the pupil has understood, observe their response and clarify any misunderstandings;
- encourage the pupil to use self-help strategies for example. Rehearsal or visualisation;
- encourage the pupil to let you know when they have not understood, this can be via verbal or non-verbal means, such as using a 'traffic light' system; and
- allow the pupil time to process the information, apply the '10 second rule' – the teacher counts silently to 10 to allow the pupil to formulate a response.

## Expressive Language

**[Expressive language is] a process of formulating ideas into words and sentences, in accordance with the set of grammatical and semantic rules of language.**

(Cantwell and Baker, 1987)

Pupils with difficulties in expressive language may:

- use short/immature sentences;
- over-use pointing or gesture to convey meaning;



- be slow to express themselves;
- omit grammatical words such as 'is, a, have' or make mistakes with word endings for example -ing, -'s, -ed';
- struggle to retell events or a story in a meaningful sequence;
- be unable to form sentences/questions appropriately;
- put words in the wrong order, for example "go home me";
- be unable to retrieve the exact words they require resulting in frequent pauses or over-use of fillers such as 'you know, thingy'; and
- find it hard to contribute to class discussions, give explanations, or describe what they are doing.

### **Strategies to Support Pupils with Expressive Language Difficulties**

The teacher should:

- give time for the pupil to think about what they need to say, find the right words and formulate the sentence;
- ask open-ended questions;
- give prompts if the pupil cannot think of the word, for example, what do you do with it? Where would you find it? What does it look like?
- use multi-sensory teaching methods to assist the child's storage and retrieval of the words in the future when teaching new vocabulary;

- repeat back what the pupil has said, but using the correct words and grammar so that they can hear the correct form;
- expand on what the pupil has said by adding new words or a new idea;
- avoid asking the pupil to repeat the sentence again after you; and
- avoid finishing a pupils sentences or saying the words they can't find as this can be frustrating for the pupil.

Pupils are also required to use language in a social context as well. They need to have an understanding of the rules of interaction. This is covered in the next section.

### Pragmatic Language: Social Use of Language

Pragmatic Language involves three major communication skills:

**Using language**

**Changing language**

**Following rules**

Each one will now be explained.

**Using language** is where the language is used for different purposes, such as:

- **greeting** (e.g., hello, goodbye);
- **informing** (e.g., I'm going to get a drink) ;
- **demanding** (e.g., Give me a drink);
- **promising** (e.g., I'm going to get you a drink); and
- **requesting** (e.g., I would like a drink, please).

**Changing language** is where the language is changed according to the needs of a listener or situation, such as:

- talking differently to a peer than to an adult;
- giving background information to an unfamiliar listener; and
- speaking differently in a classroom than on a playground.

**Following rules** is where the language is changed for conversations and storytelling, such as:

- taking turns in conversation;
- introducing topics of conversation ;
- staying on topic;
- rephrasing when misunderstood;
- how to use verbal and nonverbal signals;
- how close to stand to someone when speaking; and
- how to use facial expressions and eye contact.

Pupils may experience difficulty with:

- content and direction (despite having fluent/ articulate speech);
- being specific;
- comprehension;
- play skills;

- following unwritten rules of conversation;
- school routines and events;
- the use of jargon;
- understanding non-verbal communication;
- prosody (rhythm, stress, and intonation of speech);
- humour;
- appreciating other points of view; and
- generalisation, for example, learning set of behaviours for one situation but cannot carry over learning to different situation.

### **Strategies for Supporting Pupils with Pragmatic Language Needs**

The teacher should:

- encourage the pupil to actively listen;
- encourage the use of greetings and goodbyes;
- encourage the pupil to maintain a conversation by eye-contact, or nodding;
- only accept language relevant to the conversation;
- encourage turn taking in games and in conversations;
- avoid being side-tracked by constant interruptions; and

- give the pupil time to respond.

Some pupils have global language disorder and experience difficulties with both receptive and expressive language. Global language disorders affect both the understanding and use of language.

All three elements of speech, language and communication are needed in order to get messages across. Each of the three elements (using, changing and following rules) is multifaceted and multi-layered. Without aspects of any one of these elements, what pupils say and understand can become confused. With all these elements, pupils can maximise their attainment.

## Summary of Good Practice

Teachers should:

- ensure pupil does not have a hearing loss;
- use the pupils' name to gain attention;
- be aware of the complexity of the language you are using with the pupil, the language can be complex in terms of the length of the sentence, the structure (grammar) or the vocabulary used;
- start an activity by explaining each step using clear, simple language;
- be visual if possible, for example use real objects, pictures, photos, video and symbols;
- be aware of the benefits of using multi-sensory materials;
- give a sequence of commands to follow with a pause between each one to allow the pupil time to process the information;
- emphasize key words by using slight stress and appropriate non-verbal communication;
- introduce new vocabulary considering using visual strategies, for example attribute web, multiple meaning tree, spider-gram or a word map;
- consider using mind maps when introducing or discussing topics;
- back up auditory commands, where possible with visual cues, gesture and directionality;

- try to work out with the pupil anything they have said that not been understood through using pictures, objects and guesswork;
- avoid asking a pupil to repeat, instead restate to the pupil what has been understood;
- observe the pupil's response to check that the information has been understood, by his or her expression for example;
- have realistic expectations;
- give the pupil time to talk, the pupil may need more time to understand a question, think about a reply and then say it;
- avoid finishing the sentence for a pupil but repeat back what the pupil has said clearly and correctly so that he hears good examples; and
- try asking prompting questions if a pupil cannot think of a word, for example function, associations, similarities and differences.

### Environmental Considerations

- Adjustments may need to be made to the classroom and school environment e.g. reduce background noise and distractions where possible. Be aware of the impact of visuals displays i.e. they may interfere with the pupil's attention and listening.
- Be aware of the language demands of a whole class activity. Understanding group direction and coping with the distractions of class situations pose particular difficulties for some pupils with language problems.
- Consider where the pupil is sitting in the classroom, and provide preferential seating to enable the pupil to have face-to-face contact with the teacher.

- Create distinct areas in the classroom for resources, for different areas of learning and clearly label equipment and containers.

### **Active Learning**

- Encourage the pupil to use strategies to process information – repeating, silent rehearsal, identifying important words in the instruction. These may need to be taught or modelled repeatedly.
- Make the pupil aware of the teaching objectives.
- Make the pupil aware of good listening skills and promote active listening.
- Encourage the pupil to explain what they have heard. The pupil will know that his listening will be checked, but the adult can also monitor the level of language that is understood and modify it accordingly.
- Pupils should be encouraged to communicate their needs.
- Focus the pupil's attention before giving instructions and ensure eye contact.
- Encourage the pupil to tell you when he does not understand.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

- Language is the key to communication, learning, thinking and remembering.
- There is a positive relation between the language spoken to children and children's language growth.



- The best outcomes for children are achieved through partnerships between parents and professionals.
- The environment plays a key role in the acquisition of language skills.

Effective early intervention allied to active parental involvement results in enduring benefits in academic attainment and social adjustment.

**Dealing with parents and their children with honesty, sensitivity and competence will help develop trusting effective relationships between parents and professionals. The combined efforts, knowledge, experiences and motivations of parents and professionals help children to develop to their fullest potential.**

(Buckley, 2006)

## Resource Suggestions

### Expressive and Receptive Language

#### Books

Locke, A.(1985) *Living Language and Teaching Talking*. Windsor: NFER Nelson

Martin, D. and Miller, C. (1996) *Speech and Language Difficulties in the Classroom*. London: David Fulton.

McMinn, J. (2002) *Supporting Children with Speech and Language Impairment and Associated Difficulties*. Birmingham: The Questions Publishing Company

Snowling, M. and Stackhouse, J (1995) *Dyslexia, Speech and Language: A Practitioner's Book*. London: Whurr Publications.

Turnbull, J and Stewart, T (1996) *Helping Children Cope with Stammering*. Sheldon Press

#### Resources

Elklan – Series of Language Builders. Resources to support children with speech, language and communication needs. <http://www.elklan.co.uk>

LDA – a wide range of resources to help with many areas of speech and language work, e.g. Language Cards, Listen and Do etc. LDA, Duke Street, Wisbech, Cambs. PE132AE

Speechmark Publishing – a range of books and products.

[www.speechmark.net](http://www.speechmark.net)

Winslow Press – a range of resources such as Leap into Listening (photocopiable listening activities). Winslow Press, Goytside Road, Chesterfield S40 2PH.

## Social Use of Language Skills/ Pragmatics

### Books

Bliss, T and Tetley, J. (1993) Circle Time and Developing Circle Time. Bristol: Lucky Duck Publishers

Gray, C (2000) The New Social Story Book, Arlington, USA: Future Horizons

Mildred, M (1989) Let's Play Together. London. Green Print

Mortimer, H (1998) Learning Through Play – Circle Time. Leamington Spa: Scholastic

Sher, B (1998) Self-Esteem Games. Canada. John Wiley & Sons

### Resources

Mad, Sad, Glad game – 'emotions' photo-cards from Wimslow Press (also available from LDA)

Superstickers – have badges such as 'I listened carefully'. PO Box 55, 4 Balloo Avenue, Bangor, Co.Down BT19 7PJ

Social Skills Posters – Good Listening; Good Talking; Good Waiting; Good Asking; Good Thinking. Taskmaster Ltd., Leicester

## Useful Contacts

### AFASIC

1st Floor <http://www.afasicengland.org.uk/>  
 20 Bowling Green Lane  
 London EC1R 0BD 0845 355577

Cranogue House <http://www.afasicnorthernireland.org.uk/>  
 19 Derrycourtney Road  
 Caledon  
 County Tyrone BT68 4UF 028 3756 9611

### ICAN – THE CHILDREN'S COMMUNICATION CHARITY

Website: <http://www.ican.org.uk/>  
 eMail: [info@ican.org.uk](mailto:info@ican.org.uk)  
 I CAN  
 8 Wakley Street  
 London EC1V 7QE 0845 225 4071

### ROYAL COLLEGE OF SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPISTS

Website: [www.rcslt.org](http://www.rcslt.org)  
 eMail: [info@rcslt.org](mailto:info@rcslt.org)  
 2 White Hart Yard  
 London SE1 1NX 020 7378 1200

Arthur House  
 41 Arthur Street  
 Belfast BT1 4GB 02890 446385

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICE**

Website: <http://www.sess.ie/>

eMail: [info@sess.ie](mailto:info@sess.ie)

Cork Education Support Centre

The Rectory

Western Road

Cork

Ireland

00 353 1850 200 884

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES TRUSTS: CHILDREN'S SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY SERVICES**

### **Belfast HSCT Speech and Language Therapy**

Website: <http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/SLT.htm>

North and West Belfast 0845 606 6596

South and East Belfast 028 9056 5565

### **Northern HSCT Speech and Language Therapy**

Website: <http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net/>

Ferguson House

57-59 Manse Road

Newtownabbey BT36 6RW

02890 341586

### **Southern HSCT Speech and Language Therapy**

Website: <http://www.southerntrust.hscni.net/>

Child Development Centre

Lurgan Hospital

100 Sloan Street

Lurgan BT66 8NX

02838 323262

**South Eastern HSCT Speech and Language Therapy**

Website: <http://www.setrust.hscni.net/>

Scrabo Children's Centre  
Ards Community Hospital  
Church Street  
NEWTOWNARDS BT23 4AS

02891 510190

**Western HSCT Speech and Language Therapy**

Website: <http://www.westerntrust.hscni.net/>

Woodview  
Gransha Park  
Londonderry BT47 1JG

028 7185 4345

## Education and Library Boards – Speech and Language

### **BELB Comet Project**

Website: <http://www.belb.org.uk/>

40 Academy Street  
Belfast BT1 2NQ

02890 564252

### **SEELB ISACC Project**

Website: <http://www.seelb.org.uk/>

Grahamsbridge Road  
Dundonald BT16 2HS

02890 566200

### **SELB Language & Communication Service**

Website: <http://www.selb.org.uk/>

3 Charlemont Place  
The Mall  
Armagh BT61 9AX

02837 517820

### **WELB Language & Communication Service**

Website: <http://www.welb.org.uk/>

1 Hospital Road  
Omagh BT79 0AW

02882 411305

## Multi-Disciplinary Support Teams to Schools

### **Belfast Health and Social Care Trust**

#### **Children's' Interdisciplinary Support Team (CIDS)**

Everton Complex

2 Ardoyne Road

Crumlin Road

BT14 7AW

02890 510523

### **Northern Health and Social Care Trust**

#### **Multi-Agency Support Teams for Schools (MASTS)**

Unit 1 Cornstore

Market Street

Moneymore

BT45 7PE

02886 747860

### **Southern Health and Social Care Trust**

#### **Action for Children in Education (ACE Team)**

Pinewood Villa

Longstone Hospital

Loughgall Road

Armagh

BT61 7PR

02837 412830

### **South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust**

#### **ASCET Team**

8 Moss Road

Ballygowan

BT23 6JE

02890 97520941

### **Western Health and Social Care Trust**

#### **Western Education Support Team (WEST)**

Spruce Villa

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Londonderry

BT 47 1JG

02811 865265/6



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Department of  
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[www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)

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## Useful Websites

Department of Education, website: <http://www.deni.gov.uk>

C2K, website: <http://c2kni.org.uk>

Belfast Education and Library Board, website: <http://belb.org.uk>

Economic and Social Research Council (ERSC), Access, Research and Knowledge Database: <http://www.ark.ac.uk/>

Education and Training Inspectorate, website: <http://www.etini.gov.uk>

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland: [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

General Teaching Council Northern Ireland: <http://www.gtcni.org.uk/>

National Association of Special Educational Needs, (nasen): [www.nasen.org](http://www.nasen.org)

The National Strategies, on-line profession development materials for teachers: <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk>

North-Eastern Education and Library Board: <http://neelb.org.uk>

Queen's University, School of Education: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEducation/>

Regional Training Unit: [www.rtuni.org](http://www.rtuni.org)

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists: [http://www.rcslt.org/speech\\_and\\_language\\_therapy/commissioning/resource\\_manual\\_for\\_commissioning\\_and\\_planning\\_services](http://www.rcslt.org/speech_and_language_therapy/commissioning/resource_manual_for_commissioning_and_planning_services)

St Mary's University College: [www.stmarys-belfast.ac.uk](http://www.stmarys-belfast.ac.uk)

South-Eastern Education and Library Board: <http://seelb.org.uk>

Southern Education and Library Board: <http://selb.org.uk>

Special Education Support Services: <http://sess.ie>

Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (Scotens): <http://scotens.org>

Stranmillis University College: <http://www.stran.ac.uk/>

The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), on-line special needs and disability training materials:

<http://www.tda.gov.uk/teacher/developing-career/sen-and-disability.aspx>

University of Ulster, School of Education:

<http://www.socsci.ulster.ac.uk/education/>

Western Education and Library Board: <http://welb.org.uk>





