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SEN Matters

In this issue:

Transforming SEND

Interview Kit Messenger – *Curious not Furious*

Building psychological safety for staff in your school

The therapeutic classrooms: the future of classrooms

Transforming SEND

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Editorial



Welcome to this bumper Transforming SEND edition of *SEN Matters*. For this edition we have thrown out the rule book. It is the largest edition we have ever compiled with some fantastic articles by some amazing practitioners, experts, and educators. We are sending this edition out to every school across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, completely free, to publicise the work we are doing around SEND to support schools.

This *SEN Matters – Transforming SEND* edition has been curated so that each article is weaved into and links directly back to the Transforming SEND programme, which includes projects created as part of the Department for Education’s (DfE) Delivering Better Value (DBV) and Safety Valve programmes. There will be more on these later.

In November headteachers are invited to the Transforming SEND formal launch through a series of conferences, and this edition will tell you more about the programme showcasing some of the excellent practice we have going on within our schools and provide a range of techniques and resources to support busy teachers and staff in the classroom.

We are passionate about this, as *all* our children deserve a world class educational experience, delivered by highly skilled teachers in schools led by inspirational leaders. This edition is peppered with top tips for teachers from our HIAS team and other experts from across the local authority, along with teachers and leaders working in some of our schools.

“ I felt like everything was going on around me and I could not take it in. ”

I was always an awkward child, shy, a loner, quiet, yet loud – a contradiction. Primary school was a whirlwind, I felt like everything was going on around me and I could not take it in. I did not have many friends. I found it difficult to focus at school but could on certain things; give me Lego any day! I struggled academically but one thing I did have was determination.

Secondary school was not much better than primary. I still feel the sting from the humiliation of being ridiculed at school in a careers lesson, when the teacher, after reading my work, shouted out, “*you’ll never be an architect, can’t even spell the word*” and walked off laughing. I remember looking up and everyone else in my class was laughing too. I was so embarrassed, I felt so small. I wanted to crawl into the smallest space possible and disappear.

For me, in English, every book felt like all the words had been thrown up in the air and landed in different places. Yet due to technology, spell check has become my best friend. Without it I would not have been able to progress academically or in my career. In fact, I would not even have had a career.

Resitting a number of core subjects exams enabled me to get the elusive GCSE grade C– it felt like torture – and eventually accessed university following my A’ levels, becoming a teacher, thinking *“I’ll show that teacher who humiliated me and make sure no-one else has to go through that same experience”*.

I started teaching, and guess what? I loved it. The reason it worked out for me was due to a combination of factors. Firstly, meeting an amazing woman who would proofread all my work, and then finding I was actually good at working with teenagers, and that working in schools in challenging contexts suited my skillset.

“I taught myself coping strategies to use at work in order to be successful including to-do lists and mind mapping...”

As I progressed within my career, I taught myself coping strategies to use at work in order to be successful including to-do lists and mind mapping and finding my own strategies to help me focus.

In the autumn of 2022, my son came home with a school report which had comments around his lack of concentration and poor focus, his dreadful handwriting, and his inability to sit still. His previous reports had mentioned these things, but as he has grown, they seem to become more pronounced. Following investigation, he was diagnosed as having a range of additional needs. Our reaction was relief because we could now tackle his barriers in an informed way. So, what does any parent do now they are armed with these facts? Engage with as much literature, podcasts, programmes, and people as possible to gain a much better understanding than before but also engage with teachers who are well informed so we can work together to support my child.

Everyone has a back story, yet that feeling of being stupid at school stuck with me for years and well into my forties.

“This is why this Transforming SEND work is so important.”

This is why this Transforming SEND work is so important. We all need to ensure that the school experience is better for all children. As Kit Messenger would say, *“we need to understand WHY”*. If we acknowledge that we can all do better, then maybe fewer children will have a very challenging and unhappy school experience.

How is this edition structured?

Introducing Transforming SEND and how this links to the DBV and Safety Valve programmes

This section will introduce the Transforming SEND work and all the new resources that have been created and are now available for schools.

Leadership and culture

This section is on leading inclusive schools and creating an inclusive culture. This does not just happen, it needs to be cultivated, embedded, and weaved into policies and practice. We meet two of our keynote speakers Tamzin Hall and Jenny Turner, who will bring this to life at the conferences. We also hear from Laura Harman-Box and Clare Litwin, Leaders at Talavera Junior School, on how they have created and embedded an inclusive culture.

Relationships and behaviour

In this section are articles on relationships and behaviour. Beth Roberts, Primary Behaviour Service (PBS), and Nicola Kelly, Specialist Teacher Adviser (STA) have written two articles, the first on practice strategies that can be used in the classroom and across the school and a second article on the link between behaviour difficulties, and speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), as well as how to support SLCN in schools. We also meet Kit Messenger, the keynote speaker at the conferences, who will engage and captivate you with her approach.

Consideration of the learning environment

How do we create inclusive learning environments? Sara Hawker (STA) and Sonia Aurora (STA) have written a piece on inclusive classrooms. We have a piece from Shahana Knight from Teaching Positive Connections (TPC) Therapy who creates amazing learning environments in schools.

SEN support teaching strategies

Lastly, we have a number of articles on practice strategies within the classroom, from a range of teachers, practitioners, and experts in their field. From Services for Young Children, HIAS inspectors have put together strategies to assist secondary schools with SEN support. Each subject inspector has provided their top tips for their subject areas. Our next contributor Jazz McCullough, is a science teacher at Inclusion Education. I used to teach Jazz, in an inner-city school which was at the time one of the weakest school in England. Jazz has written two articles, one on *How to be inclusive in science*, and the second on *Inclusive school reports*.

We then have articles from Lynette Willis, SENCO at The Coppice Spring Academy who has written about working memory, and Amanda Goldsmith who writes about SEN support in art at Toynbee School. There is also a co-constructed article written by Lisa Karalius, HIAS Inspector/Adviser, Deb Wilton, Specialist Teacher Adviser, Lloyd Brown and Heather Marshall, Speech and Language Therapists (Communication and Interaction Team, Specialist teacher Advisory Service) on *Making the classroom accessible for all: language and literacy*.

Finally, some parting gifts...

This cross-branch collaboration has produced many of the articles, and created the offers we are developing to support schools in meeting the more complex needs within our system and has focused everyone behind the Transforming SEND strategies.

Before I finish, I want to add some top tips, questions and prompts which may be useful to consider.

Specialist support

- For children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), have you read section F of the EHCP? Do you understand this? Do teachers know the contents of section F? They should and should be using this when planning lessons.
- For children without an EHCP, have you checked out the SEN Support Guidance materials? <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/sen-support.pdf>.
- Have you read the Whole School SEND: Teacher Handbook www.wholeschoolsend.org.uk/teacher-handbook.
- Before we even talk about the lesson, Schemes of Work (SOW) or learning, what strategies do you need to consider teaching pupils so they can be successful in your lessons? ie creating lists and mind-mapping. Are pupils aware of strategies to help them? How embedded are meta-cognition strategies at your school?
- Have you spoken to your SENCO about strategies you can use in class?

Teaching and learning

- Classroom environment – have you considered the layout and feel of your classroom? I see lots of high arousal environments. Consider displays, classroom layouts, where pupils sit, temperature in classroom, noise and lighting, but there are more considerations! What is it like for a pupil in your classroom? Sitting in their seat.
- Working memory – many children have working memory issues, yet I still see teachers not chunking up instructions, not using dual coding or task planners.

- Task design – how are you designing your lessons? What tasks and activities are going to help pupils understand and learn?
- What adaptations are you putting in place to support pupils' learning in line with their peers?
- What scaffolds are needed for pupils to understand the learning?
- How do you model abstract ideas into concrete examples?
- Do you allow movement breaks for those who need it?

Leadership

- Support for peers – do we as line managers or peers check if help is needed or if assessments may be available?
- If you have any influence over continuing professional development (CPD), can you base it on the four broad areas of the code of practice as outlined by David Bartram in *Great Expectations*?

I hope this gives you a flavour of what is in store. This edition will also be my last as editor, as I hand over the reins to Frances Akinde who joined HIAS in May as a Special Educational Needs Inspector/Adviser. Frances has a wealth of experience from starting out as an art teacher, right here in Hampshire, to being a specialist adviser, Alternative Provision (AP) leader and a special headteacher.

So, grab a cup of tea, sit back, and enjoy! We have certainly enjoyed putting this together and remember, this edition is free! We want as many support staff, teachers, and leaders to access it as possible, so please share amongst your networks – it is vital that we spread the word, and support staff in schools with relevant and helpful guidance to best meet the needs of all of your children and young people.

Thank you, and if you would like to hear more from me, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Naomi Carter

School Improvement Manager – Specialist Provision and Inclusion, HIAS

Transforming SEND in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

Transforming Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is an ambitious Local Authority (LA) led programme that was established in response to the growth in the SEND needs of the children and young people in our settings and which is projected to continue:

- Hampshire maintained over 14,500 Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in January 2023. Forecasts indicate the LA could be maintaining nearly 24,500 EHCPs in 2029 (a 68% growth).
- The Isle of Wight (IOW) maintained just under 1,500 EHCPs in January 2023. Forecasts indicate the LA could be maintaining around 1,700 EHCPs in 2027 (a 15% growth).

The vision

The **Transforming SEND** programme has an overarching vision for:

“All children and young people with SEND in Hampshire and the IOW to be empowered to achieve outstanding outcomes” by:

- building a shared culture of inclusion.
- adopting a consistent approach
- working within budgetary constraints
- being responsive to changing needs

The Hampshire and IOW programmes differ slightly, but both have several workstreams sitting under three areas:

- 1. to provide the right support at the right time, which meet needs effectively at the earlier stages of the SEND pathway**
- 2. to maximise strengths based, person-centred approaches, which achieve improved outcomes for children and young people with a EHCP**

3. to continuously improve LA performance against SEND statutory obligations.

The programmes build on each LA’s previous high needs transformation workstreams and have recently been expanded to include several new initiatives, which are supported by the DfE’s *Delivering Better Value* (Hampshire) and *Safety Valve* (IOW) programmes.

Here is everything you need to know about each programme and what is happening during the autumn term.

Transforming SEND Hampshire

Transforming SEND Hampshire was launched internally in January 2022 and has recently been rebranded, ready to launch externally to schools and other education settings during the autumn term.

The programme has expanded following a successful bid to the DfE’s *Delivering Better Value* initiative. £1m grant funding has been awarded to focus on the following areas:

- improving parental confidence
- promotion of inclusive practice in schools
- increasing awareness and understanding of the support available from the LA and others
- LA participation in annual reviews.

New workstreams have been added to the programme to deliver this.

The programme has already had some strong successes.



Right support, right time

- 13 sector led improvement projects are now up and running across Hampshire, to build capacity in schools at the level of SEN support. These evidence-based projects are being led within groups of schools and other educational settings, supported by the Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service (HIAS), ensuring that they fully respond to local need. Alongside this, work continues to embed the [SEN Support guidance](#).
- A review of outreach services has been completed to refine the local authority outreach strategy. As a result, new service level agreements are being signed with outreach providers to ensure that mainstream schools have access to a high quality and consistent offer.
- The [Local Offer/Family Information and Services Hub](#) has been reviewed and relaunched. The look and feel are now significantly improved. The content has been refined and updated to ensure that families and professionals are able to maximise the benefits of the site.
- There has been an expansion of therapy provision within the Communication and Interaction (CI) team. Both Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy capacity has been increased. We remain committed to developing therapist expertise in the field of education, and providing specialist training for specific caseloads, including social, emotional and mental health (SEMH). This expansion ensures that therapists can work with schools to build capacity through indirect therapy, in addition to providing direct therapy where needed.
- In the summer term of 2023, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology Service (HIEP) piloted person-centred planning meetings where a decision has been made that a child's needs can be met at the level of SEN support, and an EHCP is not needed. Feedback has been positive, and a decision will shortly be made on how to extend the implementation of this pilot to impact a wider range of pupils, parents/carers and schools.

Improve outcomes, control costs

- A new SEND banding framework was introduced to Hampshire and IOW mainstream schools in September 2021, providing a more consistent and robust approach to allocating top-up funding for children with SEND. A review of Special Schools funding has been undertaken and a new framework is planned for 2024.
- Eight Employability Hubs and three Independence Hubs are now open across Hampshire, providing ambitious pathways into employment and independence for young people with SEND.
- Hampshire's SEN Sufficiency Strategy has been refreshed to ensure the right type and number of places are available in the right locations. Two new special schools are on track to open in Whiteley and Eastleigh in September 2026, providing 260 additional places phased over three years. Alongside this, the SEND capital investment programme delivered 160 additional SEN places in September 2022, and over 80 places following in September 2023. Over 150 more places are under consideration for delivery by September 2025.
- A new open framework for alternative provision was launched in September 2022 to enable all spend to be compliant. A framework for managed educational packages is being considered and work continues with the independent non-maintained school settings (INMSS) market to secure block contracts and negotiate fees.

Continuous improvement

- In 2023, the SEN Service finished clearing overdue requests for an EHCP. Hampshire bucks the national trend of decreasing EHCP timeliness and improved by 30 percentage points in 2022, achieving 45.7% timeliness while clearing overdue cases. So far in 2023, 72% of EHCPs have been issued on time.
- A review of SEN panels has taken place and changes will be made from the autumn term, including trialing new ways to allocate placements in maintained specialist provision.
- A team is being put in place to address the backlog of unprocessed annual reviews.

Transforming SEND Isle of Wight

Transforming SEND Isle of Wight was expanded as a separate programme in January 2023, following a successful DfE Safety Valve bid covering the following actions:

- Clarify Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) through dissemination of SEN support guidance and training to headteachers and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs).
- Improve quality of EHCP annual reviews through training, greater LA engagement and improved processing.
- Ensure more robust oversight of decision making during the assessment and co-production of EHCPs.
- Increase maintained/academy specialist placements on the IOW, minimising the need for expensive placements.
- Create an early intervention 'Primary Behaviour Service' to reduce the number of permanent exclusions and meet needs earlier.
- Improve the post-16 offer, encouraging take up of supported internships and supported apprenticeships, improving preparation for adulthood outcomes, and reducing demand on the high needs funding block.
- Review the governance of the programme board with the intention to include a reference group which will include stakeholders, partners, and children and young people, to help inform planning in the local area.

The Transforming SEND IOW programme is broadly organised around the same three areas of focus as the Hampshire programme and will be formally launched to all IOW schools through the Transforming SEND IOW conference on 24 November 2023.

What's been happening?

- Since April 2023, the Council has started work with IMPOWER Consulting to deliver a SEND Advice Hub, Model of Good Practice and SEND Framework. This has already included a successful pilot with schools on the deployment of a Valuing SEND tool. This is a toolkit for settings and schools to ensure children and young people with SEND have access to high-quality local provision, that meets their needs and enables them to achieve their potential best possible outcomes.
- A restructure of the SEN team has increased capacity within the team to better meet demand for EHCPs and will provide additional LA attendance at targeted annual review meetings, planned to start during 2024/5.

Helen Gregory

Senior Consultant – Transformation Practice,
Hampshire County Council

Plans for the autumn term and beyond

	Transforming SEND Hampshire	Transforming SEND IOW
Autumn term	Both programmes will be launched to schools in November at the <i>Transforming SEND</i> conferences. Places at these events are free of charge and open to all settings.	
	All governors have been invited to a briefing in November/December to find out more about the programme and the resources that are being launched in the autumn term.	
	The SEN Support Line was introduced in September. The support line provides fully funded access for SENCOs to gather advice, guidance and signposting from LA SEN advisers.	
	A new online toolkit – <i>SEN Support Toolkit</i> went live in September, to give advice, guidance and signposting to a range of appropriate services.	
	A fully funded training package on <i>Supporting children and young people with complex needs</i> will be launched to all Hampshire and Isle of Wight schools.	
	The refreshed sufficiency strategies for HCC and IOW will be published, covering 2023 – 2029 and informing the capital build programme for specialist provision across both LAs.	
		Person centred planning training will be available free of charge to schools to enable them to build their own capacity in this area. Bookings are open now and courses commence in the Autumn term.
	The Early Years SEN support guidance has been developed and will be launched to settings in the autumn term.	A review of processes in the Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Service (SENAR) will conclude in the autumn term, providing streamlined processes to ensure that the SENAR service is able to meet its statutory obligations.
	A pilot project will start in September, covering Eastleigh and Winchester, providing access to Communication and Interaction therapies to those without an EHCP .	Launch of the School-Wide Advocate for Neuro-Diversity (SWAN) project in September 2023. Designed to deliver increased confidence to school staff in supporting neuro-divergent children and young people and promote educational inclusivity.
Spring and beyond	Over the next 12 months, both LAs will improve their engagement in the annual review process, starting with clearing the overdue processing of annual reviews and moving towards active engagement in annual reviews, providing expertise to help children with SEND increase their independence and improve outcomes.	
	A pilot will be launched in Havant during the spring term 2024 extending portage support into the reception year at school.	

If you have any questions about the Transforming SEND programme, please email: tsend@hants.gov.uk.

Transforming SEND Conference

The *Transforming SEND* programme will be launched to all Hampshire and IOW schools in the autumn term, through a fully funded conference for headteachers.

The conference will launch the Transforming SEND programmes at a leadership level and provide headteachers with guidance and practical tools to implement change in their settings and promote a culture of inclusion. It will be an opportunity for school leaders to come together and find out more about the Transforming SEND programme, including the fully funded resources that are being launched to schools during the autumn term:

- the SEN support line
- the SEN support toolkit
- training to support children with complex needs
- training on person-centred approaches.

The conference will be led by colleagues from the Education and Inclusion Leadership team, and excellent keynote speakers have been secured:

Kit Messenger – Co-founder of Changing Chances CIC and author of *Curious not Furious*

Tamzin Hall – Performance and Psychology Coach

Jenny Turner – Author of *Relationships - the key to understanding children's behaviours*

One free place is being offered to each Hampshire and IOW headteacher.

Hampshire headteachers – choose from:

Wednesday 1 November – Portsmouth Marriott (9am to 1pm).

Wednesday 15 November – Hilton at the Ageas Bowl (9am to 1pm).

Headteachers – scan the QR code/click on the link to book, or email tsend@hants.gov.uk if you have any queries.

[Book your place at Hampshire Transforming SEND Conference 2023](#)



IOW headteachers:

Friday 24 November 2023 – Riverside Centre, Newport (9am to 1pm).

Headteachers – scan the QR code/click on the link to book, or email tsend@hants.gov.uk if you have any queries.

[Book your place at Isle of Wight Transforming SEND Conference 2023](#)



Contact tsend@hants.gov.uk with any questions.

Helen Gregory

Senior Consultant – Transformation Practice,
Hampshire County Council

Transforming SEND CPD offers

Training to support children with complex needs

Services across Education and Inclusion have come together to co-design five fully funded eLearning modules aimed at supporting mainstream schools to meet more complex needs displayed by pupils.

The training will be made available online, in phases, during the autumn and spring terms, and is entirely bespoke to the reported increases in SEND seen in our settings. It is being designed to be interactive and available in bitesize chunks, so you can access and deliver the training at a time that suits you. Tools will be included to support the self-assessment of your setting and there will be access to follow-up support.

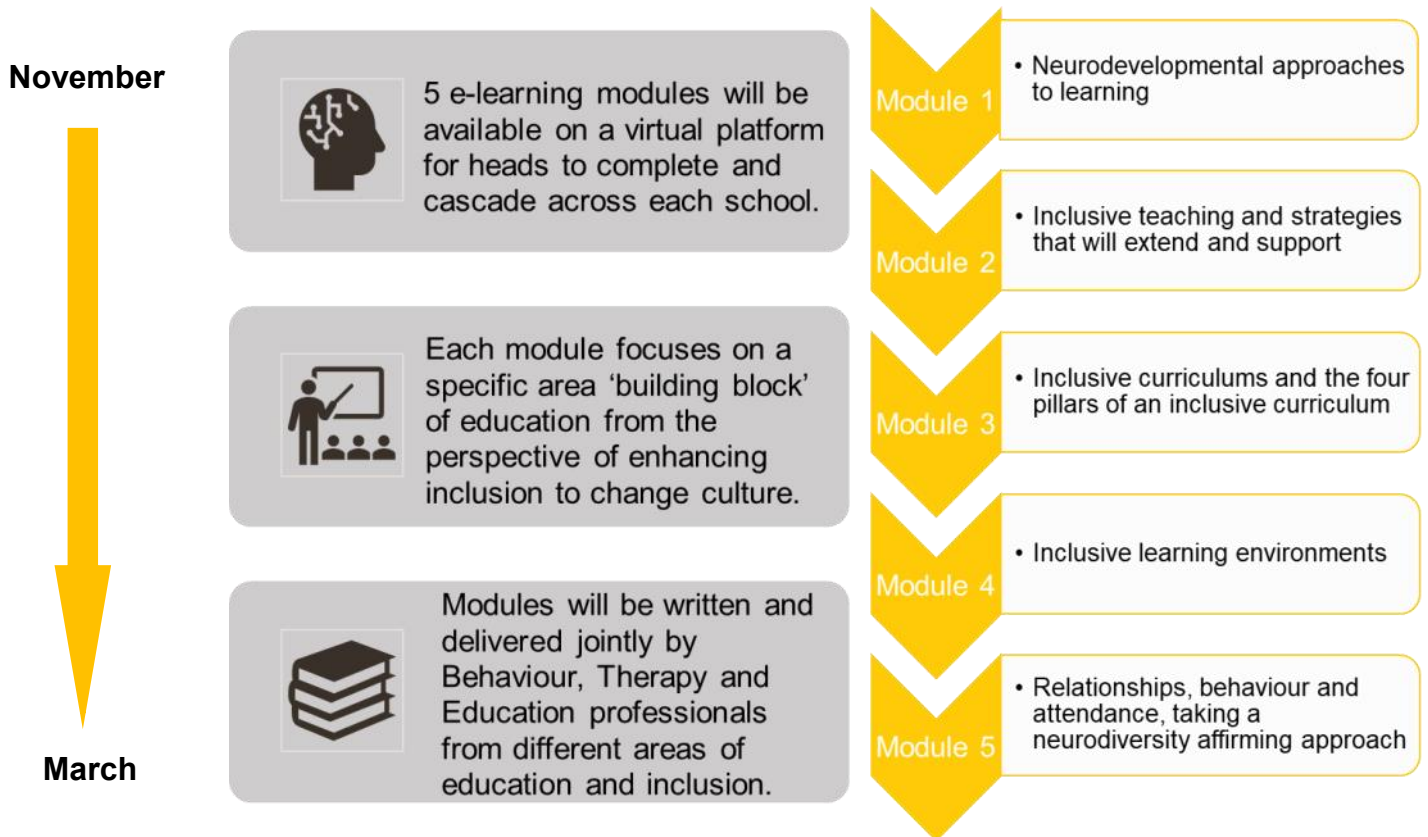
The focus of each module is listed below, along with its expected delivery date:

The training is different to our current offer and is being designed to meet the **more complex needs** of children and young people in our mainstream settings.

Person-centred planning training

Alongside this, Person-centred planning (PCP) will be available free of charge to schools to enable them to build their own capacity in this area.

You can find out more about this on [page 14](#).



All new SEN support toolkit and SEN support line

In response to feedback from schools and other stakeholders that finding information and support for pupils at SEN support is not always easy, we have launched two new services. These are designed to support mainstream school-based colleagues to build confidence and ensure easy access to a range of services and information, provided by both the local authority and others.

SEN support toolkit

Launched in September 2023, the **SEN support toolkit** includes a set of online resources which enable SENCOs and other mainstream school staff to fully explore options and support available from both the local authority and other organisations at the level of SEN support.

Schools are able to work through this before considering whether escalation to statutory assessment is required. Several key criteria were identified to inform the creation of the toolkit including:

- linking to existing content wherever possible
- signposting to local authority services but also to examples of best practice found elsewhere
- make researching advice and support at the level of SEN support quicker and easier for school staff
- easy to access without the need for passwords or paywalls
- content that is regularly updated to remain relevant and accurate.

SEN Support Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to help Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) and other school staff navigate the range of resources and support available. Feedback has told us that it's not always easy to find what you need, or to be confident that what you have found is everything that is available. We hope that you will find the toolkit a useful source of both signposting and support whether you are new in post, or an experienced professional. You can work through it consecutively or jump straight to the section that answers your query today. If you aren't sure where to go then the decision tree below might help point you in the right direction.

Quick Links

- Communication & Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Sensory and/or Physical



Strategic Knowledge Base



Local Authority Support

The toolkit is a useful source of information for experienced SENCOs but also provides a great starting point for those who are earlier in their career or new to the role. The toolkit <https://sen.hias.hants.gov.uk/course/index.php?categoryid=25> is hosted on the HIAS SEN Moodle site.

After the initial launch, improvements and developments will be ongoing. Business as usual management will be taken on by the new HIAS SEN teaching and learning advisers, who will bring their own experiences and knowledge to the content. Ongoing feedback from schools will be encouraged to ensure that the toolkit is, and remains, relevant and useful.



Strategic Knowledge Base



Local Authority Support



Understanding need



Wider Guidance



Other Vulnerabilities



Specific Interventions



Working in Partnership



Transitions



SEN Finance



Next Steps

SEN support line

Alongside the SEN support toolkit we also launched a SEN support line in September 2023. The line is staffed by experienced SEN school leaders with a wide range of knowledge across different age groups and school sectors. Where the toolkit will provide answers to relatively straightforward questions, and signposting to other support, the SEN support line is able to offer bespoke advice and support with more complex challenges.

Contact with the SEN support line starts with the completion of a short Microsoft Form asking for a few details of the enquiry and the indication of a preferred response method and time. The team will triage enquiries and ensure that an appropriate response is made as soon as possible. Whilst we do not provide an emergency response; we will aim to reply to all enquiries within 72 hours where requested. All enquiries are free of charge to mainstream schools.

We are delighted to have employed four new staff members to take on the new roles of HIAS SEN teaching and learning advisers, which includes manning the SEN support line and their introductions can be found in the following article.

A comprehensive induction programme has helped them settle into these roles. To ensure that they remain up to date in their practice and in schools, they work for approximately half their time as HIAS SEN Teaching and Learning Advisers, offering paid for support to schools. The remainder of their time is used responding to SEN support line enquiries.

Summary

In combination, the toolkit and the support line offers a comprehensive guide to the support available to schools when managing need at SEN support level. Working closely with these new services is expected to reduce the number of unnecessary requests for statutory assessment, but also to ensure that when such a request is needed it is of the highest possible quality since all earlier avenues of support have been explored.

Next time you wonder what to do next or would appreciate the opportunity to chat through a challenge with a peer, why not check out the SEN support toolkit or contact the SEN support line. We would be delighted to help!

Jenni Davies

Senior Consultant - Transformation Practice,
Hampshire County Council



Meet our new SEN teaching and learning advisers

We have four new staff members who started with HIAS on 1 September 2023. Part of their role is to handle the enquiries into the SEN support line, and update and maintain the SEN support toolkit. However, they also have capacity available to support schools over longer periods. They offer school-based consultancy including demonstration lessons and support with planning and teaching. They can provide training on an individual basis but also courses and INSET days. Their focus is on building capacity in schools by offering SEN support with the intention of continuing to raise standards of achievement.

Recruited for their range of SEND and school leadership experience across the education sector, we are pleased to introduce you to our teaching and learning advisers below. If you wish to find out more about how they could support your school, please contact Naomi Carter naomi.carter@hants.gov.uk who will be pleased to help.



Dean has worked in education since 2010, with his leadership roles spanning across mainstream, specialist, and alternative provision. In all settings, Dean's greatest privilege has been supporting young people and professionals to challenge themselves and develop their full potential. Dean is very happy to join the team, he relishes the opportunity to learn and contribute in equal measure and so is looking forward to meeting and collaborating with schools in his new role.



Di was primary trained and worked for eight years at a junior school before moving to secondary. Here she swiftly became the SENCO and stayed for 17 years. Currently, Di teaches English in a specialist autism provision.

Di is passionate about young people achieving their potential and removing the barriers to achievement.

In her other roles, Di has been Safeguarding Lead, English as an Additional Language (EAL) Teacher, Designated Teacher for looked after children and Literacy across the curriculum as

well as being on the Senior Leadership Team in both schools.



Lisa joins HIAS as a Teaching and Learning Adviser for SEN, following 21 years of working in education. She worked as a classroom teacher and SENCO in the primary phase and gained experience in both academic and pastoral roles as a Year Leader, member of the school's Senior Leadership Team and Inclusion Team.

Lisa has worked as a member of Portsmouth's Inclusion Outreach Service since 2021, helping to build expertise in mainstream schools to support pupils with SEND. In this capacity she has worked closely with a range of professionals developing training for teaching assistants and developing guidance and resources, as well as collaborating with teaching staff to support improving standards of teaching and learning. Lisa holds a BSc (Hons) degree in Molecular Biology, a Postgraduate Certificate in Education and SENCO national accreditation.



Marie has worked as a successful classroom teacher and in the latter years as a Lead Practitioner and Key Stage Leader in a special needs school since 1998. She has delivered outreach support to a range of schools, many in challenging circumstances. Marie has extensive experience in developing teachers of all abilities to become more confident and proficient in all aspects of their teaching. Marie specialises in all aspects of SEND across all phases of education. Her particular specialisms include autism, behaviour, physical disabilities and language and communication.

Marie is really looking forward to the new role and loves problem solving to enable children to reach their full potential.

For contact details for our SEN advisers, please see [Contact details](#) on page 109.

Jenni Davies

Senior Consultant - Transformation Practice, Hampshire County Council

Person-Centred Planning – how to hold meetings that enable plans to be made which are positive and possible

Hampshire and IoW Educational Psychology (HIEP) have a long history of using person-centred approaches. Funding from Delivering Better Value is allowing us to offer a two-day training programme to staff from settings and the local authority, available in autumn 2023 and spring 2024 at venues across the county. This will allow a rich exploration of PCP work, training people to lead PCP meetings and drawing upon the psychology of successful meetings.

“Can I take this home and put it on my bedroom wall?”

Many people are familiar with the term person-centred approaches and often think of a large piece of paper up on a wall, but it is the communication that is key. In some ways being person-centred really is a way of being and a form of communicating and interacting with each other whereby:

- the child or young person is kept at the heart of the process
- we are all truly hearing the voice of the child in a meaningful way
- the entire approach is positive including recognising strengths of the child, but also drawing on the strengths of the people in the child's life
- PCP meetings are forward thinking, whilst we recognise the importance and learn from what's already happened for that child or young person, we look ahead with hope rather than feeling stuck in the past
- shared responsibility is crucial, with plans being made together and all those present committing to action plans

- people like having information visually as well as verbally. Having the meeting recorded visually as we go along helps attendees to focus and makes it all feel much more manageable
- PCP meetings are supportive for all those involved
- there is a dynamic feel to the meetings, they are never boring
- they can be big or small in terms of numbers of people present but need time to be protected for the duration of the meeting, confirming that this child or young person (CYP) matters.

All of this ensures that there is genuine co-production, where families and staff are able to listen to each other and work together. Typically, a PCP meeting is facilitated by two educational psychologists (EPs), with one recording the graphic while the other guides the process. The very best way that you can understand what person-centred meetings are all about is to attend one. Your EP will be able to support you in preparing yourself, other staff, the child, family and/or friends. But you can also come on the two-day training by booking with HIEP. If places have gone by the time you read this then talk to your EP and see if you can use some SLA time for PCP work. Once you are trained then you could guide or graphic in the PCP meeting and work with just one EP partner or arrange for further training of your staff so that you can lead these yourselves.

PCP meetings can be used to support transition from one setting to another, for SEN support or EHCP review meetings or for when things are just feeling rather stuck. They can be used from pre-school through all levels of school and into college. They can be for children who are not yet using words as their means of expression or those who are very chatty.

The quote at the start of this piece comes from a young person at the end of their PCP meeting. They often want to keep their plan, their graphic, showing a sense of ownership not always seen in other meetings for them. Feedback from staff and families is consistently positive, and often emotional, showing how pleased and relieved they are to be heard and understood. The wordcloud below shows feedback from participants in recent PCP meetings.



Person-centred work has key principles underpinning it:

- **High-quality listening** (hence taking time, checking out, summarising)
- **collaboration:** learning together (it is a shared endeavour, with everyone participating)
- **respectful and inclusive** (we do not make assumptions; we celebrate the individual CYP and adjust our approach to ensure they can participate)
- **doing things with, not to** (we go at a pace that suits the CYP and keep their voice central, we avoid jargon)
- thinking about what is important for the person **now, and in the future**
- making plans that are **positive and possible**, with the young person, family, friends, and staff.

In addition to person-centred meetings we also promote person-centred approaches, for example sending a letter to a CYP after we have been involved with them or providing information that is accessible to a CYP such as a one-page profile about the EP who is coming to see them.

There are other PCP initiatives going on across the county, including developing a person-centred annual review process through working with SENCOs and SEN colleagues. We have some SENCOs who are now using a PCP approach for all their annual reviews, and some who have applied the approach for staff, using person-centred appraisal formats. We love hearing about these developments and want to keep sharing good practice from one setting to another. Are we not all magpies of great ways of working? We were lucky to have some trainee EPs work on a small project exploring PCP in annual reviews and you can see their presentation here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mpML7pXbYA>.

The Council for Disabled Children (CDC) has also recently developed their top tips for developing child centred EHC plans, with overlap of principles mentioned here:

www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/inclusion-send/top-tips-developing-child-centred-ehc-plans.

We have been grateful to the ongoing support from Inclusive Solutions UK Ltd who have provided us with training and enthusiasm over the years. We look forward to seeing you at the training, please do ask the psychologists in HIEP for more info, we are always happy to talk about PCPs and bring more people on this inclusive and empowering journey.

To find more about the two-day training programme, please email hiep.enquiries@hants.gov.uk

Dr Anna Nolan

Area Senior Educational Psychologist,
Hampshire and IoW Educational Psychology

Leadership and culture at Talavera Junior School

At Talavera Junior School, our motto is that **every learning minute counts**; we want our children to be curious, life-long learners. As everyone in education knows, this is particularly important for the most vulnerable groups.

“Every learning minute counts”



Ensuring that our pupils with SEND are included in mainstream learning, are supported, and challenged appropriately, and make exceptional progress to close the gap to expected or greater depth are all encapsulated by this motto.

When developing a strong culture of inclusion in our school, we knew that we needed to start with our staff; it was imperative that every adult in our school knew that every child deserves an excellent education. Continuous professional development for both teaching and support staff is fundamental to success for all. We run weekly training sessions for all learning support assistants (LSAs), ensuring that they are confident in how to support pupils with SEND.

This may range from how to accurately assess pupils' reading, to running an intervention for a pupil with a motor difficulty. Sometimes, these sessions are based on the curriculum; for example, we regularly run grammar support sessions which ensure that all support staff have the skills and knowledge in this area. We need to celebrate these LSAs who have the ability to support pupils from pre-Key Stage all the way up to greater depth and understand that a pupil with SEND should not be capped by their label. We have the ultimate goal of moving children off the SEND register where possible and appropriate, giving them the skills and knowledge that they need to be successful with universal support.

Our teachers also have a weekly CPD meeting which may cover anything from subject knowledge to creative ways of teaching concepts. We moderate both within and across year groups, making the most of subject experts who support this process. We also receive training from external providers which means that we benefit from the most up-to-date expertise. We highly value training for all staff and prioritise sending teachers on courses that will benefit all; when they have attended a training session, they will disseminate the key information back to staff.

In this time of stretched budgets though, we make the most of our internal subject knowledge. One of the most valuable models that we use is team teaching – where one adult observes or co-teaches with another to share knowledge and expertise. This may be within or across year groups and may be focused on particular lessons or across the school day. This supports SEND pupils by ensuring that all teachers are confident in their delivery of all the teacher standards and ensures that outstanding delivery is the norm.

Our SENDCo is always available for advice and support, including observing pupils in the day-to-day. Our expectations remain high for all pupils. Where SEND pupils may not be able to respond to traditional methods of classroom management, we understand that these may need to be addressed in a different way. To support this, extensive training has been delivered both internally and externally to all staff. We use our valuable EP time as well as free training available from the speech and language team to support all staff in their understanding of different SEND needs.



We can all achieve culture



Most importantly, just as we expect children to be life-long learners, we expect that from our staff too. There is no sense of failure when a teacher is supported by another member of staff; we celebrate those who ask for additional support, who recognise that every child is different and that we need to pool our skills and knowledge to ensure the best for each one of them.

Regardless of the pupils' attainment, they are all valued – and know that they are. We achieve this in a number of ways. We use careful class grouping to ensure that all pupils are given the opportunity to *go backwards before they go forwards*. This attitude means that we believe in securing the basics, developing a depth of understanding in all areas, before supporting pupils to move onto the next curriculum area.

Pupils enjoy these lessons, feeling successful in their learning and able to celebrate their own achievements. It also means that all pupils are accessing the same learning with careful and specific adaptations where necessary. However, there is no attention brought to those who may benefit from additional support. Indeed, because we challenge all pupils, support is evidently given to every pupil. There is no sense that our SEND pupils are being singled out or left out.

Assessments, both formative and summative, are used where appropriate to identify areas of need for all pupils. Due to this, we have fluid groupings, understanding that no subject is a monolith – different pupils will find different areas of subjects easier or harder.



Assessments for pupils with EHCPs and individual education plans (IEPs) may be used to inform their specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound (SMART) targets, alongside year group discussions and moderations. Pupils are involved in the setting and discussion of these targets, allowing them to feel engaged and invested in their learning.



We also hold termly meetings with the parents of pupils with IEPs and EHCPs to ensure that they are engaged with their child's learning and feel confident in how to support them at home. To further support parents, we target and individually invite parents to be involved in training to support their child at home for spelling, reading and mathematical skills such as number bonds – where this is the child's particular weakness. Parents are aware that it is a school expectation that they engage in offered training to support their child at home.

Making every minute count

One area that we have found has had a huge benefit to our pupils is directed, specific pre-teach homework for both language and text drivers. This replaces those photocopied (and not always relevant!) sheets which have no impact on learning and a negative impact on both parents' and children's home engagement – and sometimes even on their mental health. Our directed homework, on the other hand, has increased parental support and engagement, allowing parents to feel involved in their child's learning. This has even seen a decrease in the need for SEND pupils to access our homework support club as parents are able to provide that support at home.

The homework has enabled pupils to develop their confidence in themselves, using advanced and technical language. Even where pupils may still not find this language easy to use, they are more able to access inputs with new learning. This, in turn, allows them to be more successful in lessons. It is a positive feedback loop that benefits everyone!



We know that not all parents will feel able to provide this support and some pupils will need to overlearn the language and skills. For these reasons, we also pre-teach in early morning work. Children come in when the school doors open and there is always a fun and engaging task ready for them, which is either pre-teaching or overlearning from the previous day's work. This work is not marked but gives teachers and support staff the opportunity for informal assessment as the children settle into their day.



These morning sessions may also be used for immediate intervention, which is time when an adult addresses misconception that a child may have developed from previous learning. It may also be a chance for the child to have more practice or to edit previous work. Immediate intervention is crucial to ensure that no one falls behind – it feeds directly into our belief that every single child should make exceptional progress. Due to the CPD programme described earlier, all adults are confident in delivering high-quality immediate intervention.

Enabling independence

In lessons, we encourage a blend of support and independence. Having an LSA working solely with one child can happen all too easily. This is to the detriment of other pupils in the class who may need support but also of the SEND pupils who need to develop their confidence and ability to work solo. One of the ways that this is achieved is through adaptations. When we plan, we work from the top down. This means that we have high expectations of all and then consider the misconceptions that could arise or the foundational building blocks of knowledge that must be in place.

Adaptations are added only where necessary and vary hugely depending on the need. We know that SEND pupils are not a homogenous group and would not expect to see an adaptation that would benefit a child with a language difficulty used to support a child with a motor problem. The most important message our teachers know is that adaptation does not mean smaller numbers or complete fewer examples; instead, they are specific and targeted. They are always designed with the aim of allowing pupils to complete them independently. Not only does this ensure that they are learning but develops their confidence too.

Small hub provision with targeted learning needs Communication support systems

Some pupils are not able to access a mainstream education. We all know that this can be stressful for everyone: parents want the best for their child and know that they are falling behind; teachers and support staff are struggling to help them keep up; children are frustrated and finding the school environment stressful or upsetting. However, it is not always necessarily right for these pupils to be in an alternative provision.

We have a Hub, a provision for a group of SEND pupils who are not able to access every area of the national mainstream curriculum.

Each of these pupils has an EHCP which is explored in-depth by the parents, SENDCo and teacher. We consider this to be a fluid provision, as some of the pupils may access their year group's learning, for example in one particular subject. Each of the pupils has a link class, meaning that they are able to develop meaningful relationships with their peer groups, as well as being part of whole school events with their class. This enables them to feel immersed in Talavera Junior School.

Their learning is differentiated, rather than adapted, based on pre-key stage curricula. We use, for example, Year 1's KPIs and have developed their own assessment grids and medium-term plans to reflect this. We deliver their learning in small chunks, the length of which has increased over the course of the year. Afternoons are generally dedicated to social skills, an area which all of these pupils are developing. They complete topic lessons, just like the rest of the school, though these are heavily focused on practical and interaction skills.



We use Makaton with the pupils; training for this was delivered to all staff, not simply those working in the Hub, as part of our dedication to every single staff member understanding the importance of inclusion. We delivered this training to parents to allow them to continue developing this communication skill at home. We also use the picture exchange communication system (PECS), which allows our children to communicate using symbols when they were not able to verbally communicate. These images are used across the school.

Typically, one might expect that pupils accessing such an adapted curriculum would not be able to take part in what can be difficult conversations about relationships and puberty. However, pupils with SEND are extremely vulnerable to abuse and, in fact, it's most important that they are given quality Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). Due to this, we have developed a specific curriculum, which is delivered to pupils in the Hub before they then take part in the Year 3 RSE/SRE week if we feel that they are able to access this learning. This topic includes concepts such as how to demonstrate good friendship and being safe with others but in a way which is appropriate and engaging. It is relevant to their lives and how to be safe within it.



Team passion and dedication

All of this could not happen without the incredible hard work that is put in every day by our teaching and support staff. However, this culture is developed and reinforced by leadership. It is vital that you are visible and engaged with the daily struggles in the classroom. Understanding that staff want the best for pupils even if they are finding it hard to deliver this means that your staff know that they can ask for help. We maintain an attitude of open curiosity, listening to what teachers and support staff say they are seeing in class. Ultimately, leadership creates the whole-wide culture of driving every child to make significant progress. It is about life chances for each individual child, opening doors to the world for them. Like everything that you do, it's relentless, pushing for something which is both individual and whole school, bespoke and mainstream. With quality-first teaching at the heart of everything that we do as educators, supporting our SEND pupils becomes not about if they can make it to Expected but how they will.

Laura Harman-Box

Deputy Headteacher, Talavera Junior School

Clare Litwin

SENDCO and Assistant Headteacher, Talavera Junior School

Building psychological safety for staff in your school

Tamzin Hall and Jenny Turner



Working in schools, for our staff, is becoming an increasingly stressful environment. The pressures of achieving good outcomes for our children, alongside teaching in classrooms where behaviour is becoming more and more challenging for us to manage. Exclusions are on the rise as are the number of EHCP requests nationally. We need to find a solution to this problem and support mainstream schools to enhance their culture of inclusivity and resilience. However, before we can achieve this goal, we need to ensure that our schools have securely embedded a culture of psychological safety for staff. With this in place our staff will be able to be their true selves, giving their best for our children.

With this in mind, we have developed TEAMS – a version of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs that aims to support all staff in school today.

Safety

At the bottom we start with feeling safe - both physically and emotionally. Without this vital integral feeling of safety, staff will be unable to move on, to develop, and to manage the demands of a busy classroom.

- Fear is one of the most powerful emotions. It is normally triggered by the threat of harm - real or imagined.
- Fear can be physical, psychological or emotional and can be masked as anger, upset, confrontation or incapacitation amongst many other feelings.
- When we create a safe environment, where staff feel able to make mistakes without fear of judgement and to express their fears and concerns, we can reduce the fear factor and enhance the feeling of safety.
- We tell our children that mistakes are how we learn and create an environment to show them that's OK - the staff in schools should be able to have that same safe feeling.
- If we recognise which staff find change difficult, we can prepare them and give them the tools and support to ensure they navigate through the change effectively and happily.
- Open and clear communication lines are the foundation of a healthy and productive work environment. By providing explicit information and guidelines, we minimise misinterpretation and ensure that everyone is on the same page.
- This also actively encourages teachers to share their concerns and ideas, fostering a culture of open dialogue.
- If some staff do not read their emails regularly, we need to find a way of communicating that works for all staff. The fear of being wrong or not knowing will cause negativity and bad feelings amongst the staff leading to the task not being completed and a lack of consistency for the children.

Our top tip for creating a safe environment is to give you and your teachers space to let off steam, either via a coach or through your leadership team. Offer them a date and time when they have an hour to speak about their thoughts and feelings to explore the best way forward.

Give your teachers space to let off steam, either via a coach or through your leadership team.

S

Mind

Being held in mind and listened to is essential for the well-being and growth of teachers and school staff. Recognising and respecting the unique needs of individuals is a cornerstone of creating a supportive environment. By implementing processes that allow for open discussions, we ensure that due consideration is given to each staff member. This approach fosters a sense of inclusivity, where everyone feels valued, and their concerns are heard.

If we feel listened to, we understand the importance of encouraging teachers to think outside the box. Our aim is to create an environment that values innovation and creativity.

When we recognise and appreciate the efforts of teachers, we boost morale and job satisfaction ensuring that their hard work does not go unnoticed.

It also fosters a sense of respect among peers and others in the school community, creating a supportive network that uplifts and motivates teachers.

A simple “thank you” can go a long way in making individuals feel recognised and motivated to continue their hard work.

Two-thirds of teacher members feel stressed at least 60% of the time. That's why a focus on the mind helps to provide a support network that not only alleviates stress but also boosts self-esteem.

Say “well done” to each other - including yourself!

Our top tip for creating a positive and supportive environment is to say “well done” to each other. Challenge yourself to notice and congratulate colleagues on their achievements. Don’t forget to appreciate your own efforts too!

Acceptance

Creating a culture of acceptance within schools is vital for the well-being and success of teachers and school staff. Acceptance encompasses accepting ourselves, respecting others’ opinions, being accepted by others, feeling comfortable enough to voice our opinions, and fostering a sense of belonging and teamwork.

Everyone’s perspective and experiences should be acknowledged and respected, fostering an inclusive environment where everyone feels heard and valued. By embracing diverse viewpoints, we can encourage open dialogue and create a space for growth and learning.

Building a culture of kindness rather than judgment is crucial.

Establishing a support system is essential for creating a sense of connection and trust among colleagues. Having a buddy or someone to confide in at work allows for mutual support and encouragement, reducing feelings of isolation and increasing overall job satisfaction.

Statistics show that many teachers and school staff face challenges in feeling supported and accepted. A significant percentage of school staff, approximately 59%, lack confidence in disclosing unmanageable stress or mental health issues to their employers. Additionally, a staggering 86% feel they are not well-supported by their organisations. These statistics highlight the urgent need for creating a more accepting and supportive environment within educational institutions.

Assign each staff member a supportive buddy.

Our top tip for promoting acceptance in your school is to assign each staff member a supportive buddy! The buddy will become a cheerleader and someone available for confidential conversations and mutual acceptance.

Empowerment


Empowering staff in schools is crucial for creating a positive and effective educational environment. By empowering educators, we provide them with the autonomy and support they need to excel in their roles and contribute to the overall success of the school.

Empowering staff to have autonomy in their wellbeing is essential. Recognising that you are an individual with personal needs and challenges, providing support and resources to prioritise your well-being ensures that you can perform at your best.

Supporting, rather than rescuing, is a crucial aspect of empowering teachers' growth but also instils a sense of confidence and autonomy.

Ensure sufficient training is available to everyone. By investing in professional development opportunities, such as workshops and ongoing training programmes, knowledge and new skills will be gained enhancing effectiveness in the classroom.

An alarming study by TES reveals that teachers, rank second lowest in professional autonomy among 11 different professions.



Hold collaboration meetings with your whole school staff. E

Our top tip for ensuring you and your colleagues feel empowered is to hold collaboration meetings with your whole school. Where everyone can brainstorm, collaborate where everyone has a voice.

Thrive

The ultimate goal is for all the staff in our schools to thrive, feel psychologically safe, to be the best version of themselves and to achieve their full potential. We want them to enjoy life and to create a work-life balance that works for them. When this happens, they will feel a sense of satisfaction and our children will sense that from them. When our staff are at this thriving point - they will feel safe enough, empowered enough and accepted for who they are and know that any mistake-making can be part of the learning process.

When we sit within our window of tolerance, we are able to engage, to interact with each other and our children – we are regulated and self-aware. Teaching is not a job that we can leave at the door when we go home, but it is vitally important that we are not spending every minute of the day working.

Supporting staff to develop their own well-being strategies that allow them to recognise when things get too much, will stop burnout, stop absenteeism, and stop the profession from losing so many excellent teachers.

In the 2021 NASUWT wellbeing survey over 70% of teachers and education staff said workload was the main reason for thinking of leaving their job.

Staff well-being is not a one size fits all. Schools are making excellent progress in prioritising staff well-being, but it goes deeper than biscuits and fruit. By working with staff to help them identify the strategies that work for them as individuals, we can support them to identify their hooks and triggers.



Don't force fun instead focus on culture T

A sense of self-awareness enables us to catch ourselves before we fall. When we foster a TEAMS culture in school, staff will want to participate more and look after each other, knowing that they too are being held in mind. We cannot force staff to have fun on a well-being day, but it will come as a result of building the TEAMS culture.

Our top tip for ensuring you and your colleagues thrive is to avoid attempting to manufacture fun. Instead, focus on cultivating a safe and inclusive culture, and genuine enjoyment will naturally emerge.

Conclusion

When we build a culture of psychological safety in schools, staff feel able to make a difference – to belong to a team and to know they matter. It may be helpful for schools to conduct an audit based on the TEAMS pyramid to see where they are. Covid had a profound effect on our children, but it also had a significant effect on our staff, leaving many of them stuck in fight or flight mode. Our ability to make decisions and to use our initiative was taken away during this time and we need to empower our staff to take back some ownership around problem-solving by ensuring that they are heard and kept safe. That way they will be able to manage the demands of the classroom and our dysregulated children more confidently by forming better relationships with them.

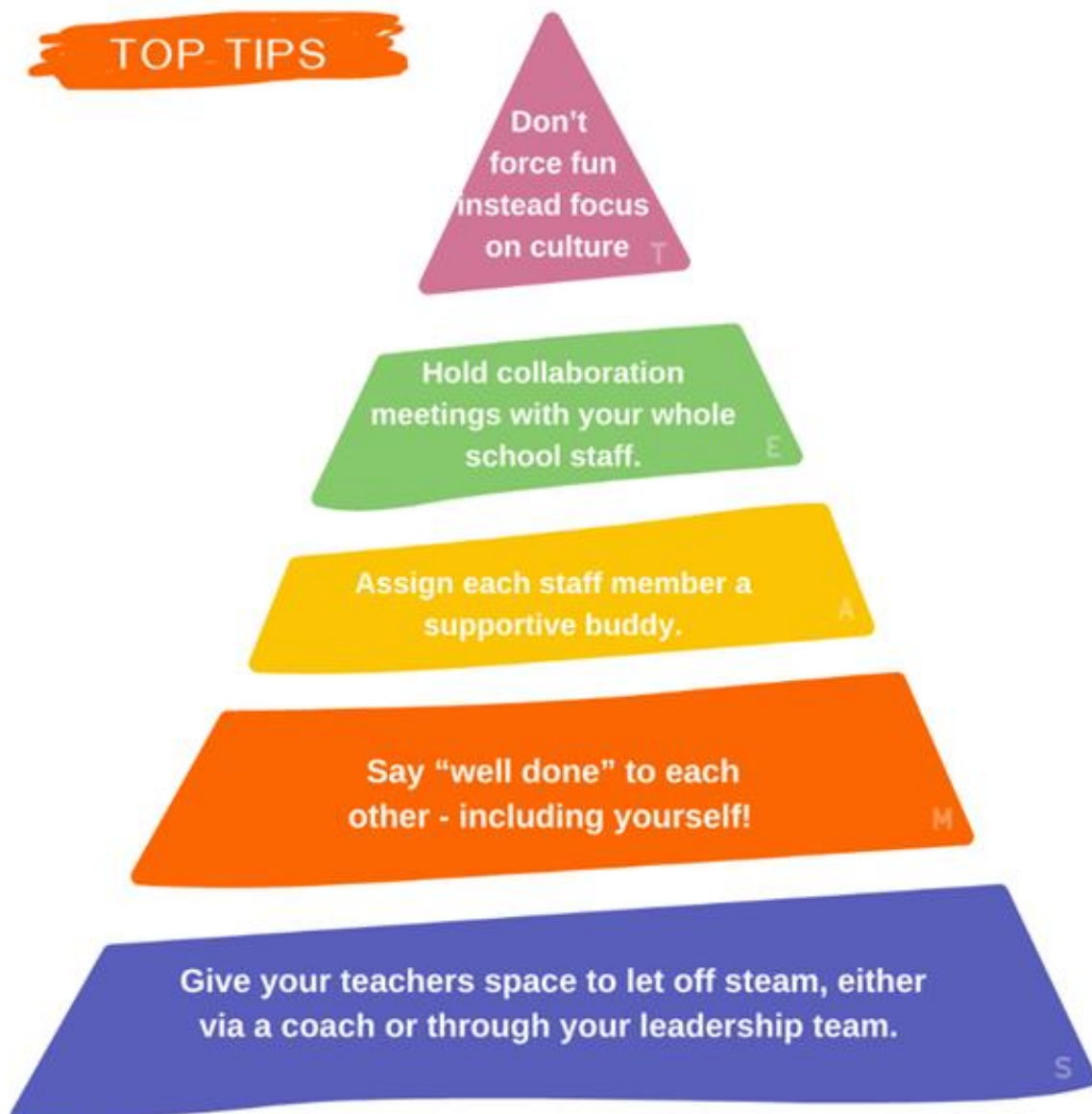
If you would like more information on how we can help you embed TEAMS in your school, then please do email us.

We also have available a White Paper on *Head Teacher well-being* and a book *Relationships – The key to understanding children's behaviours* (available on Amazon)

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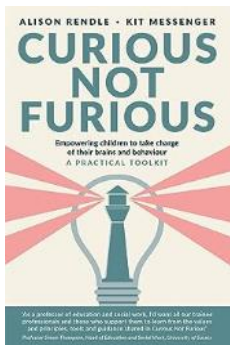


Interview with Kit Messenger, co-author of *Curious not furious*



Be a bit curious... who is Kit Messenger?

My mind is bouncing around, full of ideas and excitement. Still buzzing hours after the most inspiring interview with Kit Messenger, co-author of the book *Curious not Furious*, I'm flying high on the conversation, having had my daily DOSE - those of you who have read the book will know what I mean and for the rest of you, are you curious yet? (Check out chapter 11 of her book).



I'm travelling back home from Brighton on a hot summer's afternoon after Frances Akinde and I met with Kit Messenger to chew over all things inclusion, relationships, brains and behaviour. Kit and I have been emailing over the past few weeks and today is the culmination of those emails. We

start with small talk but, being educators (and all of us like to natter) we jump straight in, discussing schools, approaches, kids, our experiences, books we have read...

...Hold your horses! I pull us back, and we all smile, realising that we are so excited we have gone off on a tangent (this happens repeatedly). I love conversations like this, our passion for doing the right thing is brimming over and I cannot wait to share this with you here. Above all I hope this article gives you a bit of an introduction to Kit Messenger herself and her messages and makes you curious to find out more. Read the book....and take action.

Getting to WHY

Kit's passion, excitement, and enthusiasm for helping children and young people is palpable. She has a way of drawing you in and making you want to learn more, she is a natural storyteller, and you feel inspired to implement the strategies straight away.

At Kit's core is to get to the WHY a child or young person is struggling. You cannot help but be mesmerised by this. While I listened, I thought about how applicable her approach is across our school settings and what we can do differently to make a positive impact on children and young people in our care.

“Key principles are: insistence, persistence, consistency and a bucket full of kindness and support.”

Throughout the conversation about the key elements within *Curious not Furious*, we keep coming back to how we can take the learnings from our curiosity into making a difference to that child.

Pivotal to this is the '5 Cs' (chapter 10, page 122) and their role in giving children their daily DOSE of the 'happiness' chemicals or hormones – Dopamine, Oxytocin, Serotonin and Endorphins. Without re-stating everything that you will find in her fantastic book, the 5 C's are when a child feels...

- Comfortable
- Connected and cared for
- That they Count
- Capable
- A sense of Control.

“We all have different ‘cups of need’”

Kit reiterates that we all have different “**cups of need**” – the crucial point being that a child gets their daily DOSE once their 5C’s are met, when their “*cup of need*” is full enough that the happiness hormones are having a positive impact on how they feel.

So, this gets me thinking...

When schools analyse their *behaviour* incidents, do they consider the 5Cs? If not, shouldn't they?

During the discussion we look at how, if some of our most under-served children and young people do not get their DOSE from their families and school, then there is the possibility that they could be susceptible to gangs and groomers giving them their DOSE instead of the safer adults around them. The child gets attention and the illusion of connection and control that makes them feel good. The emptier their “*cup of need*” in the first place, potentially the more susceptible they are.

How can teachers actively plan to give children the kindness and support they need for their daily DOSE, instead of it coming from more sinister sources?

Call the paramedic! Being *Curious not Furious*.

“Imagine I have a car crash, driving into someone else’s car. I would jump out and apologise, buy them gifts, get them a courtesy car, BUT, it does not make me a better driver.”

Let’s find out **WHY** I crashed:

1. It could be stress and I need stressbusting.
2. I could be tired and need sleep hygiene.
3. It could be I find it difficult to focus and was distracted, so I need to focus on attention control.
4. I may just be a bad driver and I need some more lessons.

Translate this into a child having a behavioural *car crash*. When they spiral and lash out Kit’s approach revolves around going beyond the current restorative approaches – when you have a car crash and it’s your fault, you show remorse by apologising, but it does not make you a better driver, does it? How can we make children and young people be brain fit in order to deal with any situation?

“Respond, follow up, notice.”

Kit has a number of answers: **respond, follow up, notice**. This struck me as really powerful and, most importantly, **not being cross!** This reminds me of my mother, telling me off as a child. Kit emphasises that the approach is the same with children and adults.

This is at the heart of not being furious but instead being curious about **WHY**.

I mentioned to Kit how ‘*Zones of Regulation*’ are used in many schools and how Kit’s use of colour is similar but at the same time, completely different. Kit’s take on this is that the zones are great to help children and young people understand their emotions. However, ask yourself, what then does that child, and you as an educator, do with this new understanding?

To run with the medical metaphor - the paramedic gets you up and running again, but their medical intervention on you has not fixed the problem. So, you go for surgery and it’s the surgeon that makes an enduring positive change, through their actions. In this context, to be ‘*brain ready*’ all these things from Kit’s approach need to be in place: DOSE, the 5Cs and then Prep4best.

I really liked Prep4best because without realising it, sometimes we set up children and young people to fail. For example, we discussed with Kit some of the language we use with children – words like *“you’ve got to concentrate more”* – instead, we could adjust language used, and get to the root of why the child is unable to concentrate. Just telling the child to concentrate does not give them the tools, approaches and confidence to help themselves to concentrate better, instead it reinforces the message *“you are not capable”*, flying in the face of the 5Cs and them getting their daily DOSE.

Another example of this came up in our conversation about teaching assistants. Kit made the insightful point, *“what does having a teaching assistant with you all the time say to a child? ‘You’re not capable, you need an adult.’”* Teaching assistants are a valuable resource within our schools, and they provide children with the security they need in class to thrive, but as leaders we need to consider their long-term use with children and how we deploy them.

“Our job is to help children feel better about themselves and to help them find their strengths.”

Our job is to help children feel better about themselves and to help them find their strengths. From this came a *‘strengths cards’* deck that Kit developed. They support adults to help children develop their executive functions and life skills through a strengths-based approach. It’s about saying to a child *“I can see this feels really hard for you, but your brain is great at this.... and you can do it!”*.

“I see schools that are constantly in A&E”

So even if we’ve been a paramedic with a child, none of it will matter if every day at school feels like they’re at A&E.

Kit emphasises *“if you don’t teach and practise these skills they won’t develop.”* This concept resonates as I think about the schools I visit who are firefighting when it comes to behaviour. As Kit says, *“some schools are stuck in A&E”*. How can we create the right environment in schools to empower children to consistently practise the skills they need?

And what does A&E look like? The conversation turns to different approaches towards ‘behaviour’ in our schools: control and compliance approaches and policies written for the adults not the children; exclusion; detention; the relational approach towards *‘behaviour’* such as trauma informed; and the *‘Empowerment approach’* that Kit has developed. Kit believes children follow control and compliance approaches because they fear the consequences.

“Why do we make children line up?”

We discuss why schools do the things they do. Is it because we have always done it that way? Kit poses a question: *“why do we make children line up?”* We move on to discuss, the purpose behind some of our rules and routines. Children can really benefit from boundaries, so do we really understand and think through how they help children? All of Kit’s work is based on neuroscience, so if you understand how the brain works, *“you wouldn’t expect someone to learn the violin by just talking to them for two hours about it, same with swimming. When we are working with children we always need to think, is this going to help the child with the skills they’re missing?”*

BUT what do you do when a child does not keep to the expectations? We discuss the use of exclusion and Kit believes it could even be described as *“cheap and cheating – as in, it does not teach the child anything, and it cheats the child of their learning.”* Kit explains, *“our job in schools is to educate,”* we can still hold children to account for what they do and follow things up, but without taking a child out of lessons.

Relational approaches put children at the centre and give the child the skills to navigate life. During the conversation we keep going back to *“this is not about the child behaviour, it’s about the skills they have missing”* and we need to give the children and young people the tools they need ahead of time, so they can respond.

With the Empowerment approach, we attempt to get to the core. If you look at your detention rooms, and notice it is filled with the same children every time, the school is not getting to the why behind behaviours.

“I don’t believe in spray and pray.”

One of the reasons I like Kit’s approach is her commitment to embedding the work across a school and into its systems. She has a lot of metaphors and phrases to illustrate this and one resonated with me when she said, *“I don’t believe in spray and pray”*, referencing schools that do one-off CPD events and hope they have lasting impact.

Our DBV conference for headteachers, where Kit will be presenting, is a one-off event – we know that this on its own cannot fundamentally change school practices. It’s the start of a deeper look at cultural change through better training and day-to-day understanding, cascading the work through the system and embedding it into school practice.

Kit’s approach – being curious, finding out why and enabling children and young people to be *‘brain fit’* to handle difficult situations – has been evaluated against the Kirkpatrick training evaluation model¹. However, for it to work effectively, it must become part of policies and practice and weaved into systems and processes, with leaders monitoring to check it is actually being embedded.

And finally...I ask Kit to give me her top three tips for teachers and leaders. Here they are:

1. be curious not furious and be insistent and consistent about this with all staff
2. notice the tiny signs. Tiny signs are part of a bigger picture
3. be present and aware for any children, young people and staff.

“In whatever activity you are in, be present.”

This last point is really important, especially with our busy lives. How many of you have sat on a Teams call in a meeting whilst doing your emails? Or you are in a conference checking your phone or on your laptop? So, Kit’s advice, in whatever activity you are in, **be present**.

Our afternoon with Kit Messenger was quite a journey – it challenged me, inspired me and profoundly affected my outlook on school practice. So much to take in!

But, if I were to pick my top takeaway from the conversation, it was, *“are we planning for children to have their daily DOSE?”* What can we each do differently tomorrow to help the children in our care to feel safe and connected, that they matter, and they **can** do this, always coming back to that curiosity about why they are struggling?

For more information, *Curious not Furious* is available from all good bookstores, with a new book on ‘executive functions’, on the way. Information on the empowerment approach: Changing Chances CIC® - The Empowerment Approach training for parents and professionals www.changingchances.co.uk/empowerment-approach

Naomi Carter – School Improvement Manager – Specialist Provision
with **Frances Akinde** – General/Special Educational Needs Inspector/adviser.

¹ What is The Kirkpatrick Model? www.kirkpatrickpartners.com/the-kirkpatrick-model

Practical strategies within the classroom

The language we use as professionals when discussing behaviour exhibited by children is of utmost importance, especially when considering the significance of relationships between educational professionals and their pupils. The words we choose have the power to shape perceptions, attitudes, and ultimately, the dynamics within every learning environment. The way we describe and interpret behaviours can influence how we understand and respond to them. Therefore, the prominence of the language we use, both regarding, around and directly to children, will be weaved throughout this article, providing opportunities for self-reflective practice.

In addition to the power of the language we use, another concept that will be entwined is why relationships in the education system are the foundation for effective behaviour management. Bruce Perry declares that research identified that having good relationships with adults has an even stronger, profound impact on development than early adverse childhood experiences. Furthermore, children who have high levels of quality relational support across their ecological system (extended family, education professionals, community support) exhibit higher levels of functioning than children with less support.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs:

When considering the unmet need a child is communicating, Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides a framework that emphasises the foundational aspects necessary for children to have their basic needs met in order to be emotionally ready to learn. Importantly, under the umbrella of safety needs is the concept of emotional safety that this relational approach and strategies throughout the article nourishes.



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Four behaviours:

Rudolph Dreikurs (1897–1972) conducted research on four main behaviours, and believed that all humans, as social beings, have a need to belong and to be accepted by others. This research provides valuable insights into understanding and addressing challenging behaviour in children. In this article, we will explore Dreikurs' framework and delve into each behaviour in detail. By examining these behaviours through Dreikurs' lens, we aim to enhance our understanding of the underlying needs behind challenging behaviours exhibited by children. Furthermore, we will explore practical strategies and approaches that professionals can employ.

Connection Needing Behaviour (based on Dreikurs' labelling of the goal being attention):

Behaviours exhibited	Interrupting, repetitive movements, showing off
How it makes us feel as professionals	Irritated, frustrated
Automatic action	Tell the child to stop. Give the behaviour attention
Pupil response	Stop. Start again
Reinforces	Behaviour got attention

What can we do instead?


- Adopt language that acknowledges the child's emotions, behaviour, feelings and validates this.
- Build up positive attention at appropriate times.
- Attending: The idea that we can openly recognise and comment on the child at every opportunity. This could be through their behaviour, *"Wow! I can see that Lucy is really focused today! I am so proud of you, Lucy!"* or through their appearance, *"Oh Luke, I love your new shoes! You look amazing in those!"* or through their mood, *"Holly, I wonder if you're feeling really happy today as I can see that huge smile on your face!"*
- Consider developing a secret code. This code allows for discreet communication during whole class teaching moments. For instance, you can establish an understanding that when you tap your shoulder, it signifies that you are exceptionally proud of that specific student.



Top Tip: Reconsider the use of planned ignoring as a strategy. If a child has a need for connection, and you ignore that need, their behaviour may escalate until that unmet need is acknowledged, potentially resulting in unnecessary unhelpful behaviours.

Language checkpoint: Reframing attention seeking to connection needing enables us to explore the child's needs and how to best meet these. Dan Hughes developed a framework that equips professionals with an approach that builds connection at every opportunity.

PACE How to build connections between adults and children
EdPsychEd

<p>Playfulness</p> <p>Light-hearted and reassuring manner Open, calm and engaged attitude Allows young person to relax Less defensive and more reflective</p> 	<p>Acceptance</p> <p>Unconditional acceptance of thoughts, feelings and struggles Normalising emotions and providing affirmations</p> 
<p>Curiosity</p> <p>Support development of Self-Awareness so young person can identify reasons behind their own actions</p> 	<p>Empathy</p> <p>Show compassion Being present in the moment to understand experiences as the child does</p> 

Reference: <https://twitter.com/EdPsychEd/status/1430443596885463042>

Power Seeking Behaviour (based on a need for control to feel safe):

Behaviours exhibited	Oppositional, argumentative
How it makes us feel as professionals	Threatened, provoked, defensive
Automatic action	Feel drawn in and the need to argue and take control back
Pupil response	Pupil confronts or ignores authority
Reinforces	Models feeling that might is right, e.g., control is important

What can we do instead?

- Offer two controlled choices. This prompts the child to feel a sense of power, meeting the need for that, whilst maintaining boundaries that are in the adult's control. This could be via a:
 - Nice/nice choice: For example, *“are you going to complete that work with this pen or this pencil?”* or *“Would you like to sit at the carpet and finish this, or at your table?”*
 - Nice/nasty: Using a matter of fact, controlled voice. For example, *“if you are choosing not to finish this piece of work now, the natural consequence to that is to complete it at your breaktime”*.



Top tip: Allow take up time! Do not expect the child to make a decision immediately.

- Avoid audiences as this could escalate the child further into their assault cycle. **Top tip:** Do not worry about losing face to the rest of the children in the class in these circumstances whereby you choose not to address the behaviour there and then, they will trust that you will deal with it later.
- Conflict avoidance through partial agreement scripts. For example, if the pupil is stating *“I wasn't whispering, I was doing work”*, the professional could respond, *“ok, maybe you were but now I want you to focus and finish the task”*.
- Distraction: The child is preparing to go into the fight/flight response at this point, therefore, distraction to engage their rational brain could be very effective.

Language checkpoint: Transforming language such as ‘challenging behaviour’ to ‘distressed behaviour’ guides us to be more empathetic and curious.

Revenge Seeking Behaviour:

This is when the child becomes emotionally dysregulated and seeks revenge for not having their needs met. Their pain is obvious by the pain they cause to others.

Revenge-seeking behaviours exhibited by children may often feel and be interpreted as deeply personal, yet it is important to recognize that many times, the child themselves may not even remember their actions. These behaviours

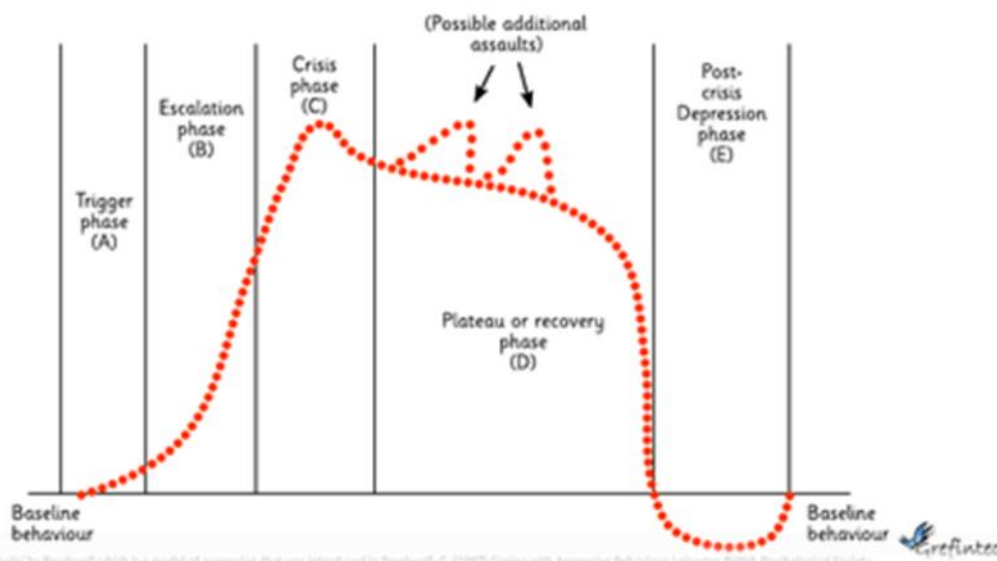
are typically rooted in the child's fight/flight response, where their instinctual reactions take over. As educational professionals, our role is to help retrain and guide children in noticing and understanding the triggers behind these behaviours. By providing them with alternative strategies and modelling different ways to respond, we can assist them in developing healthier and more constructive approaches to managing their emotions and conflicts.

Behaviours exhibited	Physical aggression
How it makes us feel as professionals	Hurt, angry, helpless and scared
Automatic action	Feel drawn to punish pupil
Pupil response	Becomes devious, hostile and violent
Reinforces	Punishment can give pupil justification for further acts of revenge

What can we do instead?

- Ensure the environment is safe for all.
 - Change of face can be very effective, allowing alternative distraction opportunities.
 - Main priority: Engage rational brain.
 - Active listening: This is powerful as we are helping the child to begin to trade in feelings of despair for hope.
- Ear shotting: Ear shotting in the proximity of the child can be successful in avoiding shame for the child, either through using success reminders to another adult about the child, or for distraction opportunities, recalling a positive experience or interest of the child.

The Assault or Breakwell Cycle



Reference: The Assault Cycle or Breakwell Cycle

<https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/the-assault-cycle-or-breakwell-cycle-12819496>

Breakwell (1997) created the Assault Cycle, which sequences five phases: the trigger phase, the escalation phase, crisis, recovery and post-crisis depression phase.

The trigger phase is the initial stage where a trigger occurs, which could be a perceived threat to the child. It supports our understanding of the first behaviours we may see as the child enters the assault cycle and allows us to explore the setting events and antecedents to crisis.


The escalation phase has been explained as the beginning stage of a loss of rationality by theorists. A child's adrenalin and blood pressure can increase as the ability to reason and listen decreases.

If the trigger and escalation phase behaviours are not recognised quickly, the crisis stage can activate. A child's fight or flight is activated, their emotional brain is in control and adrenaline is at

the maximum level for everyone involved, meaning our job as professionals is now to keep everyone safe.

The recovery stage often needs a sensory outlet to further de-escalate from crisis, whether that be the offering of a drink, distraction or a check in on body temperature – perhaps advising to take their jumper off if they are too hot, for example.

Finally, the post-crisis depression stage refers to the relational repair and re-attunement that is vital to take place. Avoiding placing shame on the child is crucial in relational repair, ensuring you are careful not to dwell on mistakes which can create more guilt and shame in children.

 **Top Tip:** Remember to visit the recovery and post-crisis stage of the assault cycle, even if you have de-escalated successfully and avoided the crisis phase. This is where the learning post incident takes place.

Co-regulation and Self-Regulation:

<p>Stage 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early development. • No self-awareness regarding feelings and emotions, the child cannot tell you how they are feeling. • Operating in reptilian brain – fight/flight. • Needs the adult to co-regulate (self-regulate for them). • Strategies: Use puppets, photos, colour monster book.
<p>Stage 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child becomes more aware of people around them. • Reptilian brain is now working alongside the limbic system, which means children may be more emotional. • Adults still need to self-regulate for them, but can point out links to physical sensation feelings, using words such as, ‘fuzzy, warm, bubbly, wobbly’.
<p>Stage 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child becomes aware of feelings in their body. • More pathways have been created and strengthened in their thinking brain, which means the child may be beginning to understand emotions and feelings. • Adults can begin to use a map of the body and make connections between events and feelings.
<p>Stage 4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated practice of these skills allows the child to identify, understand and express their feelings and emotions. • They are making connections between cause and effect and can now start self-regulating for themselves, with adult support, if needed.

Stages of Regulation:

Please see further information regarding this in Nicola Kelly’s article *The link between behaviour difficulties and speech, language and communication needs and how to support SLCN in schools* on page 40.

Visual supportive resources that children can use practically in the classroom, once able to self-regulate can include:

Zones of Regulation:

The Zones of Regulation is a framework designed to help children develop emotional awareness and self-regulation skills and how to use strategies to change or stay in the zone they feel they are currently situated. It divides emotions into four colour-coded zones: the Blue Zone (low energy and sad emotions), the Green Zone (calm and focused), the Yellow Zone (heightened emotions and stress), and the Red Zone (intense anger or anxiety). Children learn to associate specific feelings and behaviours with each zone and build emotional vocabulary exposure.

The ZONES of Regulation™ Reproducible E The Zones of Regulation Visual

The **ZONES** of Regulation™

BLUE ZONE	GREEN ZONE	YELLOW ZONE	RED ZONE
Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly	Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Relaxed	Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	Mad/Angry Terrified Elated/Ecstatic Devastated Out of Control

© 2011 Think Social Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.
From The Zones of Regulation™ by Leah M. Kuypers • Available at www.socialthinking.com

Reference: <https://www.zonesofregulation.com/free-downloadable-handouts.html>

Tip **Top Tip:** Create a toolbox linked to the Zones of Regulation colours with the child to identify strategies that they feel support them when they are in each zone!

3- or 5-Point Scale:

A 3 or 5 point scale can be designed with the child in collaboration with the educational professional, identifying how a child may feel or behave at different levels, and what the adult or child can do to help them when at that level. The numbers, rather than words for feelings, naturally means that we are not labelling any feeling or behaviour as good or bad, which can engage the child in conversations about how it's okay to feel every emotion and that it's how we manage and express it that we need to work on together.



Safe Space:

A common effective crisis strategy is the creation of a safe space. This is a designated, calm, low stimulation area that is used by a pupil when they are feeling overwhelmed and need time to process, heal or engage in a trusted adult relationship, providing openings of active listening, calming techniques and distraction opportunities.

Empowering the child to decide on the location is important due to their perception of what safe may look like versus ours as professionals.

Reference: Safe Place - Conscious Discipline <https://consciousdiscipline.com/free-resources/shubert/shuberts-classroom/safe-place>

Language Checkpoint: Swap language such as ‘*time out*’ for ‘*time in*’ – it shows the child you are there to support them, rather than an isolated punishment for having an instinctive response to a perceived threat.

De-escalation:

De-escalation requires a reduction of the intensity of a conflict or potentially violent situation, to decrease in intensity and to become less dangerous or difficult. Essentially, de-escalation refers to a behaviour that is intended to prevent escalation of conflicts. The key words in bold are the essence of de-escalation. One strategy to utilise in moments of de-escalation is that of distraction.

Distraction Opportunities:**Distraction Ideas****To engage the rational brain:**

- Dot-to-dot / Wordsearches / Puzzles
- Pictures / Knowledge of happy memories / interests / family (question tool)
- Where’s Wally / Eye Spy games

To promote breathing (regulate heart rate):

- Blowing bubbles
- Breathing cards / exercises (Star, Frog)
- Yoga cards / books to refer to

Sensory Support:

How to Make a Perfect Sensory Bottle



- Sensory smelling bags (Lavender)
- Sensory bottles / glitter jars
- MP3 players with headphones
- Chewing / sucking thick smoothie through a thin straw
- Drinking cold water

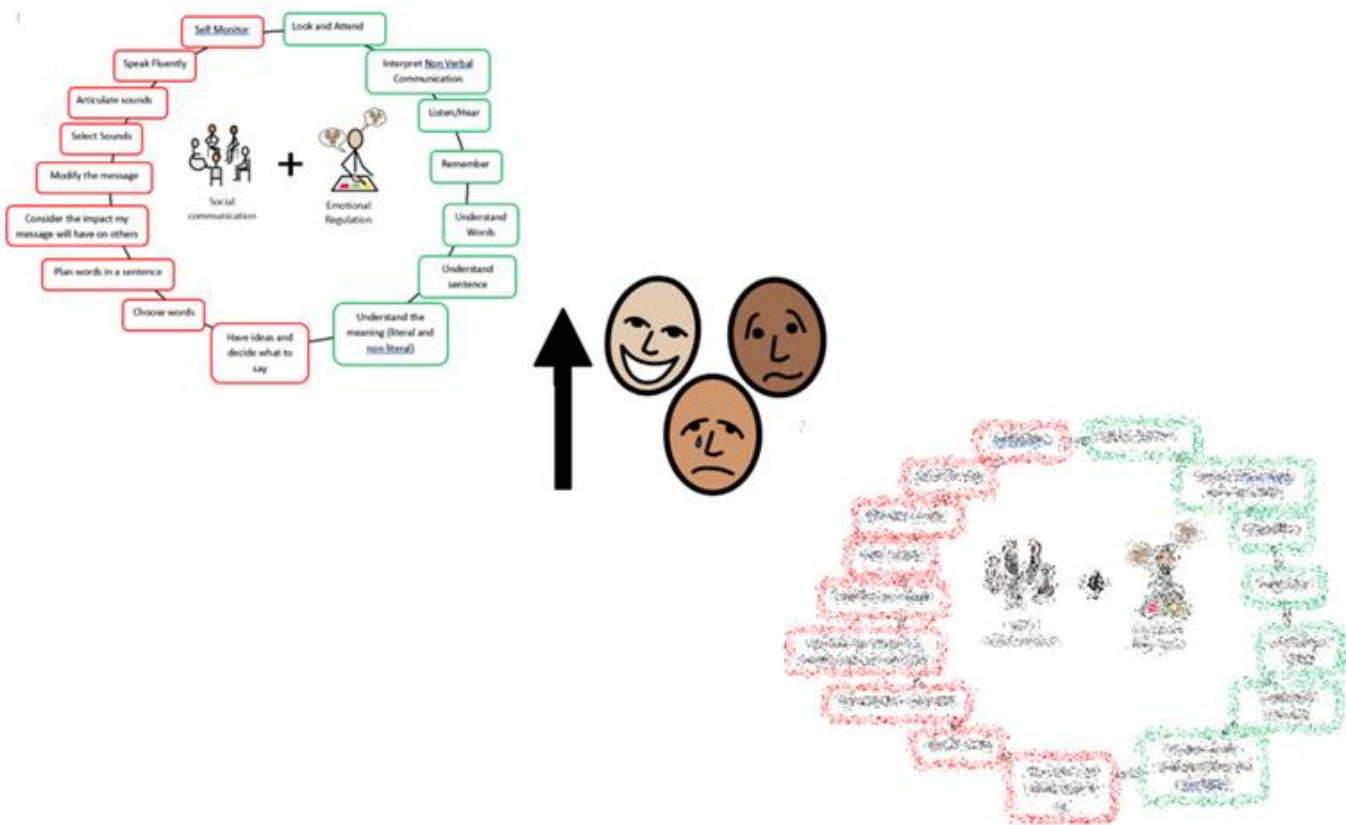
Movement:

- Bogus note addressed to staff
- Post-it note with “secret code” that needs to be delivered
- Skipping rope / bag of dictionaries – heavy duty work (rhythm)



Language Checkpoint: Fuzzy Communication Chain, adapted from ELKLAN: When we are communicating with a child who is emotionally dysregulated, due to operating out of their emotional brain, their ability to listen to language dramatically decreases. The fuzzy communication chain visually demonstrates how non-verbal communication to support them to keep safe is paramount.


The impact of heightened arousal on communication



Post-Incident Learning / Restorative Practice:

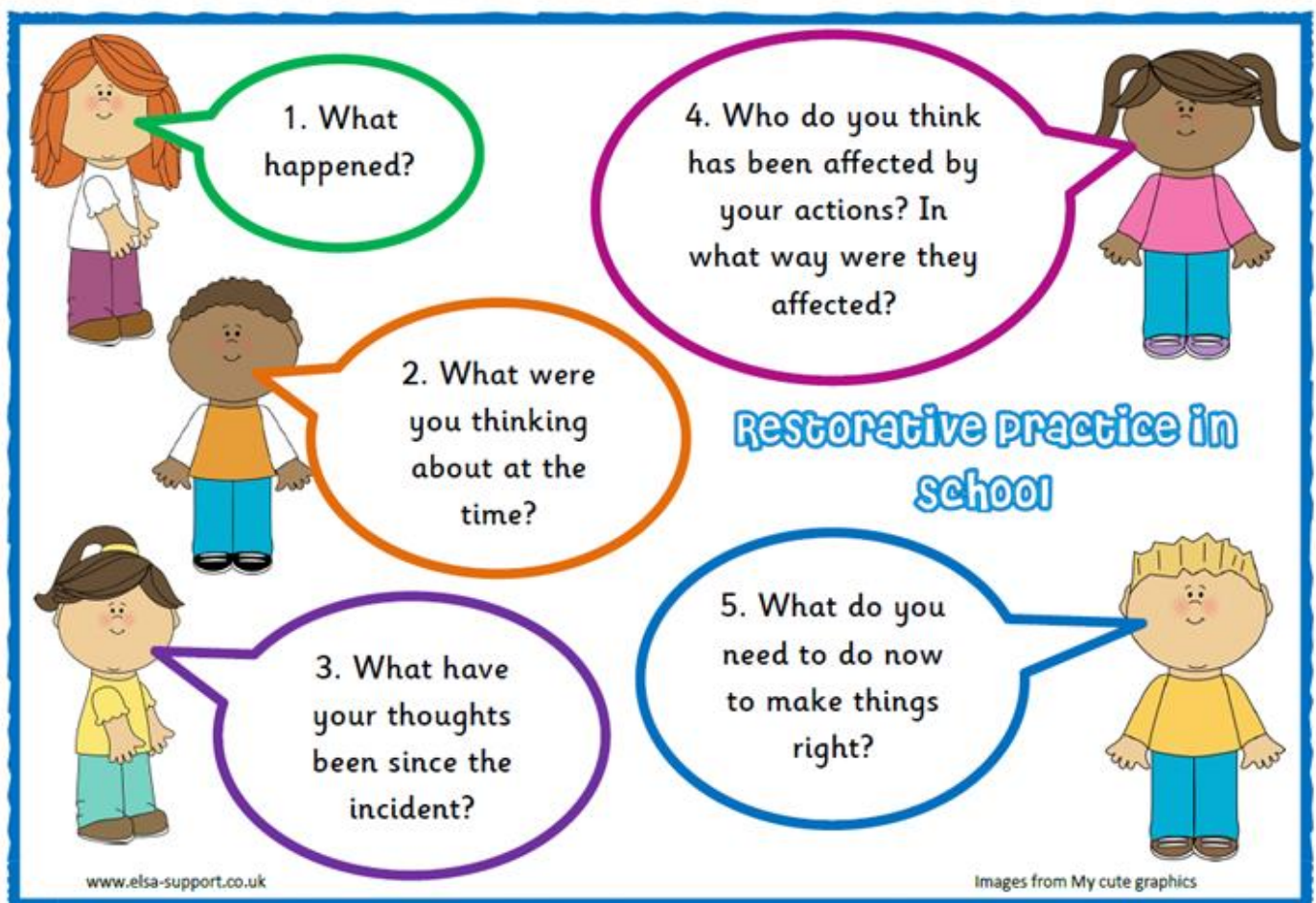
Once a child is fully regulated, engaging in restorative practices allows for open dialogue, understanding, and empathy. By creating a safe and supportive environment, children are encouraged to reflect on their actions, discuss the events and feelings involved, take responsibility for their behaviour, and understand the impact it had on others. Restorative practices also provide an opportunity to teach new skills and strategies for managing emotions, resolving conflicts, and making better choices in the future.

Required to access these skills is cognitive function and the ability to connect the left and right hemispheres of the brain, connecting cognitive thought to sensory feelings. Simply put, the child needs to be able to understand that there is a place to stop and think before acting. This only develops when the child is developing their prefrontal cortex (cognitive brain) and is no longer acting from the brain stem or limbic system (impulsive, survival response).

 **Top tip:** If a child is not able to access this cause and effect thinking, consider the use of natural consequences, spending time discussing these paths the way for a child to access restorative practice when they are ready.

There are many visual supportive resources that can aid this, tailoring it to the child's ability and capacity to engage in restorative practice, for example the use of concept cartoons. Additional to those below, please see Nicola Kelly's article that expands on the concept of blank levels:

Reference: Restorative Practice poster set - ELSA Support for emotional literacy www.elsa-support.co.uk/restorative-practice-poster-set



Top tip: Laminate this poster, cut into jigsaw pieces, face it down on the table and ask the child to choose one piece to open the conversations.



Let's have a chat resource:



Draw or write what happened...



I hurt someone



I refused to join in



I used unkind words/ sounds



I destroyed property

How did it make you feel?



ANGRY



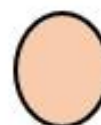
SAD



EMBARRASSED



SCARED



Draw or write how you could behave differently next time?



Find a safe person



Go to a safe place



Use my words



Walk away/ ignore

using Communication in Print.

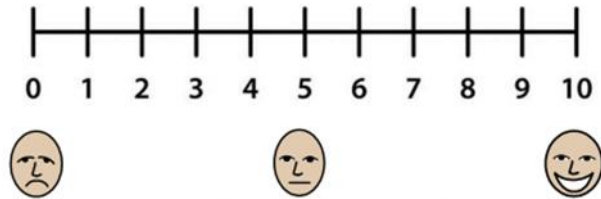
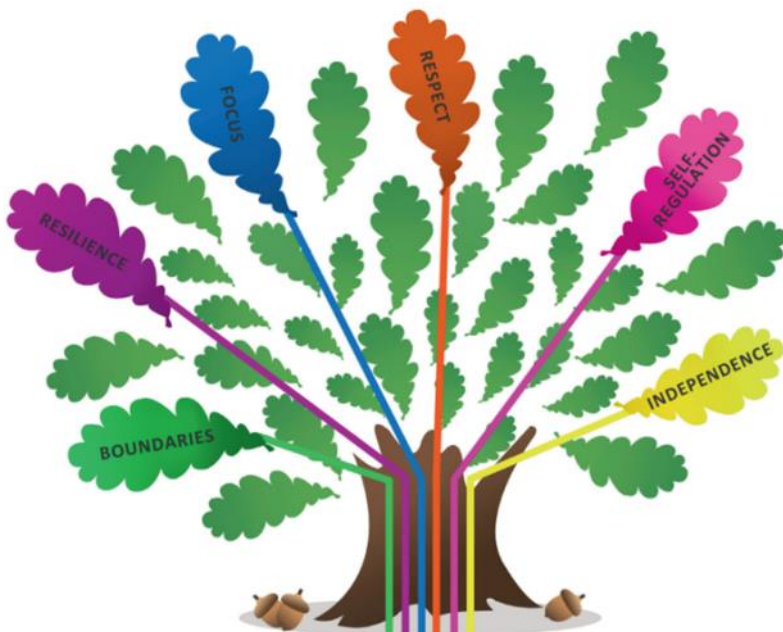
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Escape by withdrawal behaviour: (based on Dreikurs' Display of Inadequacy):

Behaviours exhibited	Refusal to try, withdrawn, hopelessness, giving up
How it makes us feel as professionals	Disheartened, discouraged, desperate
Automatic action	Frustration leads to doing it for them
Pupil response	Pupil loses interest, gives up
Reinforces	Suggests to pupils they are helpless

What can we do instead?

- Provide small chunks of precise praise.
- Show belief in the child.
- Give responsibilities to boost self-esteem and sense of self-worth.
- Initially aim to differentiate work in the 'comfort zone' of the 'learning zone' model, with moving to challenging yet achievable in the 'learning zone' when appropriate.
- Solution focused approach: A useful technique by asking children how they currently feel about certain scenarios. For example, you could ask, "how do you currently feel about starting this task?", "when you were at a 6, what made you there? You're a 4 now. What could I do to support you moving back to a 6? What could you do? What could your friends do?"

**PBS Six Strands Curriculum:**

The Six Strands Curriculum is a tool, which has been developed and trialled over time, to support both families and front-line practitioners in promoting positive behaviours, emotions, and relationships for all children. It aims to equip children with the skills, attitudes, behaviours, and characteristics to help deal positively with the many and varied social and emotional contexts and challenges they will encounter, both in the formative years and into young adulthood.

At the core of the Curriculum sit the six key 'Strands': boundaries, resilience, focus, respect, self-regulation, and independence.

For more information regarding the Six Strands curriculum and activities that support this approach, please visit Primary Behaviour Service (PBS) <https://pbs.hants.gov.uk>.

Beth Roberts

Assistant Team Manager, Primary Behaviour Service (PBS)

Nicola Kelly

Speech, and Language Therapist (STA)

The link between behaviour difficulties and speech, language and communication needs and how to support SLCN in schools

“Language is a fantastic resource for problem solving, negotiating and managing our thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Thus, language impairment (SLCN) places a child at greatly increased risk of negative social, emotional and behavioural outcomes”

Professor Courtenay Norbury, UCL 2013

Many children and young people who have behavioural difficulties, including many of those with social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH), also have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). In studies¹, up to 81% of children with emotional and behavioural disorders had significant unidentified communication needs.

These needs often go unrecognised because behaviour can mask a child or young person's difficulties with communication.

The Department for Education has highlighted children's language development as being one of the factors that impacts on emotional literacy, communication skills and self and social awareness.

The Department of Health and Social Care has stated that speech, language and communication skills are a primary indicator of child wellbeing.

Speech, language and communication needs in children and young people with SEMH:

Communication difficulties may be subtle. It is easy to recognise a child with unintelligible speech, but children with SEMH are more likely to have difficulty understanding language, using it to express themselves and the social use of language, which are more difficult to spot. The following SLCN may be present (from *Understanding the links between communication and behaviour* <https://www.rcslt.org/wp-content/uploads/media/Project/RCSLT/rcslt-behaviour-a4-factsheet.pdf>):

Difficulties understanding spoken language:

Children and young people with SLCN often have problems understanding what others say to them – for example, understanding instructions and understanding things that are not directly stated. They may also have difficulties understanding indirect requests. These children may then appear to be uncooperative, disobedient or oppositional, when in fact they have not understood an instruction or the broader context. It can be harder for them to learn new words, and words for thoughts and feelings.

Expressive language difficulties: Children and young people with SLCN can have a variety of expressive language difficulties, such as difficulty finding the right words; and problems constructing sentences or a clear narrative, and selective mutism, all of which can be misinterpreted negatively. Those who are hesitant and revise their sentences might be seen as untruthful.

Memory and concentration: Children and young people with SLCN often have poor working memory abilities, meaning they are more prone to distractions and require repetition of information. These difficulties can often be interpreted as laziness or a wilful desire to frustrate teachers and parents.

Emotional regulation: Language is important for emotional regulation. Children and young people with SLCN may have difficulties finding the words which describe their own feelings, and can find it hard to cope with their emotions and calm themselves. Language skills are also needed to understand our own and other peoples' thoughts and feelings, which are important for behaving in the expected way.

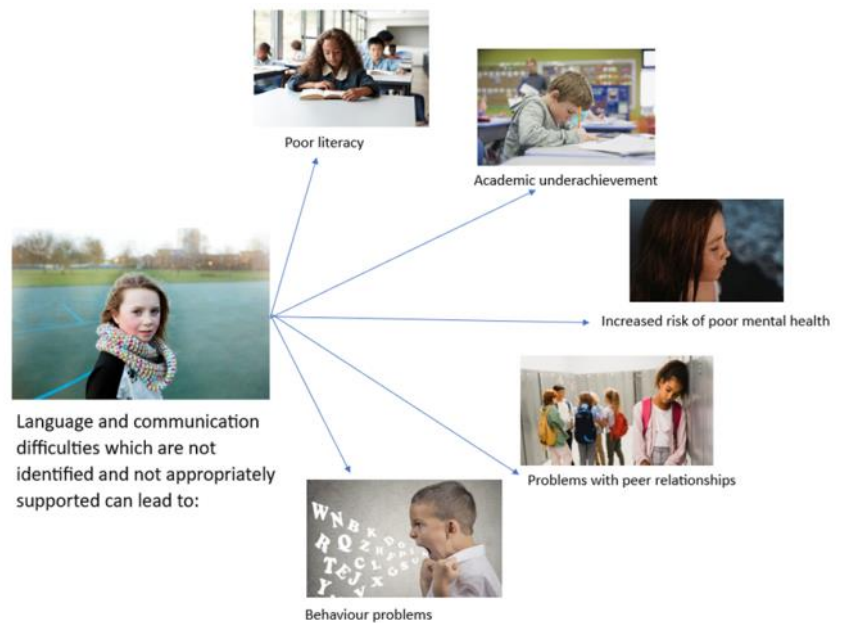
Social communication difficulties: Children and young people with SLCN may have difficulties understanding the rules of conversation, including how to repair misunderstandings when they occur. This can be partly due to slow processing, which leads them to miss cues and means their turn taking is mistimed. They may also struggle to understand jokes, idioms (for example, 'get a grip') and sarcasm, all of which are important for social interaction.

Impact of SLCN on learning, social interaction, emotions and behaviour:

A population study in Surrey found that 10% of all children start school with a language disorder. 7.5% will have Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) which is a life-long condition characterised by difficulties with understanding and/or using spoken language. That is **2-3 children in every class**, many with undiagnosed needs.

<http://www.lilac-lab.org/scales>

In addition, many children with other diagnosis will also have language and communication needs. These include children and young people with autism, learning difficulties, as well as other conditions which may impact on language such as ADHD, acquired brain injury; SpLD, hearing impairment and physical disabilities.



Behaviour and communication: The intertwined development of communication, emotional and thinking skills is a complicated process, so difficulties in any area can influence the development of the others. Research increasingly indicates that communication and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties often occur together.

This means that anyone working with a child or young person with SEMH should consider the possibility of them also having communication problems.

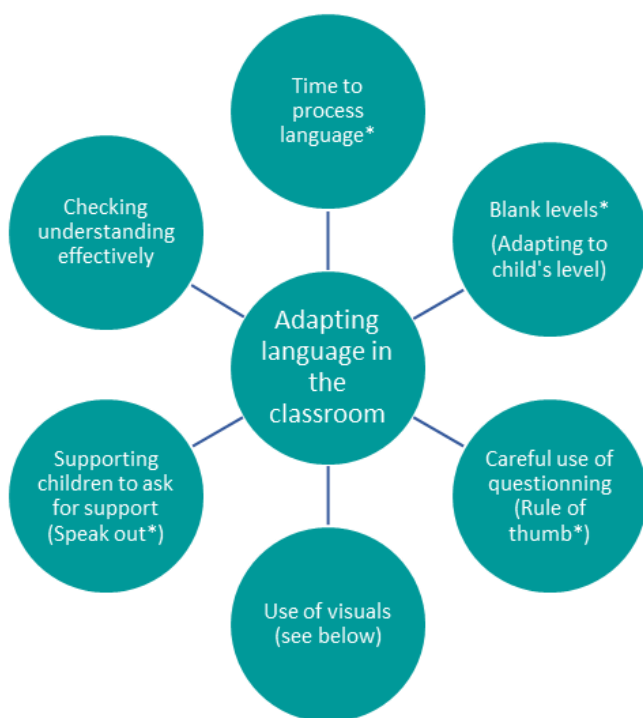
Some examples of how communication problems may be seen as behaviour problems, Cross (2011)²

Behaviour		Underlying Communication Problem
Child does not listen or pay attention	➔	Language used is too complex for them to understand
Child does not do as they are told	➔	Child doesn't understand what they have been asked to do
Child doesn't ask when they don't understand	➔	Child does not realise they haven't understood, or child cannot ask clarification questions
Child doesn't explain why they did something	➔	Child cannot easily construct sentences or narratives
Child interrupts or speaks in an inappropriate way	➔	Child is not good at 'reading' social situations or using appropriate social skills

What can help? good SLCN practice in schools

Positive relationships: (See 'Practical strategies within the classroom article' for detail of why relationships and language matter and practical strategies' by Beth Roberts, PBS)

Adaptations to use of language in teaching: There are adaptations that teaching staff can use to help children and young people to access whole class learning. These can be summarised below. Details of each of the strategies marked with an asterisk (*) have toolkits giving details on the approach on the STAS Moodle <https://sta.mylearningapp.com>



Using visuals: Selecting the right visual can support independence skills; understanding spoken language; support expressive language and social communication skills.

Please see STAS Moodle for 'Toolkits' <https://sta.mylearningapp.com/course/index.php?categoryid=2> about these and other visual supports that can be used for children with SLCN.

Examples of visuals and how they can help:

Dual Coding:

Dual coding means providing children with verbal and visual materials at the same time. If a teacher shares visual and verbal explanations simultaneously, the children are more likely to process the language and knowledge and retain the information more effectively.



Task plans:

- break down a session/activity into smaller more manageable steps
- visually shows what will happen/ what is expected/what they will need to do
- supports attention and memory
- reduce anxiety about what will happen
- shows when the end point will be
- flexible, easily adapted.



Vocabulary: children and young people with SEMH often have gaps in their understanding of vocabulary and concepts due to difficulties attending to verbal input; specific language difficulties acquiring vocabulary; gaps in their attendance in class and for some, early environments which were language impoverished.

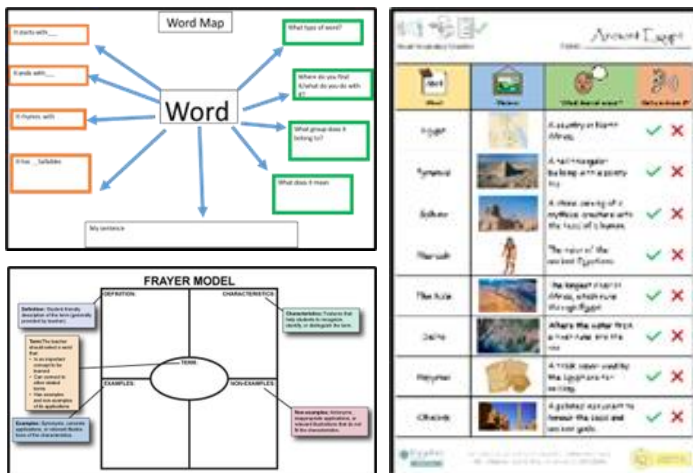
To support vocabulary in children with vocabulary and concept gaps, we need to explicitly teach vocabulary. Quigley (2018) indicates that about 2000 words make up 80% of our spoken language, whereas to access the academic learning in secondary school, students need a vocabulary of around 50,000 words - so superficial language skills can mask a child or young person's difficulties in this area. Understanding the vocabulary used in lessons is essential for children and young people to access the learning.

Characteristics of vocabulary difficulties include:

- poor attention
- difficulty following instructions.
- difficulty responding to conversations.
- difficulty understanding stories.

Whole school approaches for primary are discussed in *Word Aware* by Stephen Parsons and Anna Branagan (2022) and *Enriching Vocabulary in Secondary School: A practical resource for Teachers and Speech and Language Therapists* (2022).

Visual ways to support vocabulary learning and recall include:



Supporting Narrative skills: Children and young people with SEMH often have difficulties with narrative skills, e.g re-tell of events; story-telling (which also affects their writing) This is because narrative skills require children to have good linguistic, cognitive and social skills. Story-telling also requires a number of higher-level language skills and cognitive skills, such as the ability to make predication, draw inferences, problem solve, and look at things from another person's perspective.

Having good narrative skills is important for social interaction (many social interactions involve re-counting events); academic success, and a survival skill - children and young people need to be able to give their side of events effectively to people in authority or be able to 'talk their way out of situations'.

Different types of narrative:

Personal: "What happened when you tried to make scones?"

Fictional: re-telling fictional stories

Persuasive: "Why should you be allowed to go by yourself?"

Expository: content knowledge. Required the child to organise information.

"Persuasive narratives are increasingly important in secondary education."

Many children with SLCN have difficulties with sequencing, and their ability to express their thoughts is affected by their linguistic difficulties, as well as possible difficulties knowing what information may be interesting their listener and how much detail to give (pragmatic difficulties). Personal and fictional narrative skills are important for academic progress, including literacy development. Persuasive narratives are increasingly important in secondary education, and require children and young people to use their language skills to convince others, express opinions, give reasoned arguments and justify their position, which many pupils with SLCN will find difficult without support.

Characteristics of narrative difficulties include:

- short sentences
- lack of detail or not enough detail
- stories told in an illogical manner, e.g beginning at the end
- contradictions throughout the story
- reduced vocabulary.

Impact of narrative difficulties:

- difficulties sharing experiences
- difficulty making and maintaining relationships
- aggressive non-verbal reactions as they are unable to explain themselves
- frustration.

Children who have narrative difficulties may deal with this in aggressive ways due to their frustration of not being understood. This can particularly happen in a classroom setting if the child or young person has got into trouble that was not their fault, but they were unable to clearly express what has happened. Research shows that many young offenders have narrative difficulties due to their inability to explain or understand consequences of events properly (see Restorative Practice below and in Beth Roberts' article).

Please see the STAS Moodle <https://sta.mylearningapp.com> for further information on ways to support narrative skills, including visual frameworks.

Social communication skills: Children and young people with SLCN and SEMH needs often have social communication difficulties. This can make working with their peers difficult for them and for some cause high levels of anxiety. It can be helpful for teaching staff to support small group work by having the group rules and rules made explicitly and supported visually.

Characteristics of social communication difficulties include:

- difficulties changing language and communication style based on setting or partner
- difficulties engaging in conversation (eg initiating or entering a conversation, topic maintenance, turn-taking, responsivity, providing the right amount of information)
- difficulties repairing communication breakdowns (eg rephrasing when misunderstood)
- difficulties interpreting the verbal and nonverbal signals of others during an interaction
- not understanding ambiguous or figurative language, eg *'keep one eye on the bulb when I connect this wire'*
- difficulties making inferences (understanding information that is not explicitly stated)
- difficulties forming and maintaining close relationships.

Within lessons, use of visual conversations, such as *Comic Strip Conversations* (Gray, 1994)³ within English (to visually support understanding of characters' thoughts and feelings and to the interactions between characters); History (to visually support understanding of historical figures motivations); and in RSE (to visually support children and young people's understanding of others' thoughts, feelings and intentions and the impact it has on others) can be helpful as part of whole class teaching to support this area.

Understanding of emotions and emotional regulation: Some children have difficulties identifying and labelling their own feelings and emotions (Stage 1 in Beth Roberts' PBS article). At this stage they benefit from teaching staff helping them to name emotions (building emotion vocabulary- supported visually) and to help them think about how this emotion feels in their body. At this stage, adults need to co-regulate, through regulation *tools* which work for them.

As the child or young person's understanding and recognition of emotions and emotional vocabulary develops, they can be supported to be able to understand how to communicate their emotions appropriately and how to self-regulate to manage their emotions.

Please see the STAS Moodle for a toolkit on 'Emotion Coaching and Emotional regulation'.

Restorative conversations: See 'Practical strategies within the classroom article' section on 'post-incident learning /restorative practice' by Beth Roberts, PBS)

For a child or young person with SLCN and SEMH it is important to understand their language levels including what Blank level of questioning is appropriate. (See STAS Moodle). Staff should be aware that when pupils are anxious, their language processing is reduced, so they may need to simplify their language more than usual.

“Visual templates and the use of comic strip conversations to support their re-tell are important.”

As children with SEMH and SLCN often have difficulties with their narrative, visual templates and the use of comic strip conversations to support their re-tell are important. These visual supports also ensure that the sequence of events is understood by the adult and that the pupil feels listened to and is able to clarify mis-understandings.

Visual supports (as in Beth Roberts' PBS article) for supporting identification of emotions are also helpful.

Summary:

If you have a child or young person with SEMH you should consider the possibility of them also having communication problems.

There are resources for supporting schools to identify language and communication needs, these include the following free, downloadable guides to language and communication schools at:

Primary: <https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/shop-for-educators/universally-speaking-5-11>

Secondary: <https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/shop-for-educators/universally-speaking-11-18>

It is important that all staff working with the child or young person with SLCN and SEMH understand the pupil's communication strengths and needs, and are able to support them to access learning, and also to be able understand and communicate their choices and decisions.

Remember:

If you are thinking about how to support a child with SEMH – think language and think communication!

Resources and further reading

The STAS moodle is free to access but requires a school to register with the STAS service. To register e-mail stas.service@hants.gov.uk. Moodle link: <https://sta.mylearningapp.com>

RCSLT Fact sheets:

Understanding the links between Communication and Behaviour - <https://www.rcslt.org/wp-content/uploads/media/Project/RCSLT/rcslt-behaviour-a4-factsheet.pdf>

Promoting social, emotional and mental health - <https://www.rcslt.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/RCSLT-promoting-SEMH-factsheet.pdf>

Mind Your Words – a free online course from the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists that aims to improve understanding of children and young people who have both mental health needs (or social emotional and mental health needs – SEMH) and speech, language and communication needs (SLCN): <https://www.rcslt.org/learning/mind-your-words/#section-1>.

HCC: SEN Support Guidance for Schools <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/sen-support.pdf>

References:

¹ Hollo, A., Wehby, J.H. and Oliver, R.M. (2014) Unidentified Language Deficits in Children with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders: A Meta-Analysis. *Exceptional Children* 80(2): 169-186

² Cross, M. (2011) *Children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties and Communication Problems. There is always a reason*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

³ Gray, C (1994) *Comic Strip Conversations*. Texas: Future Horizons

Nicola Kelly, Specialist (SEMH) Speech and Language Therapist, STAS- Communication and Interaction Team and **Beth Roberts** (PBS)

The therapeutic classroom: the future of classrooms

The UK has seen a rise in the number of children struggling with their mental health and wellbeing, in fact the children's society (2023) has found that in the last three years, the likelihood of a young person having a mental health problem has increased by 50%.

Whether it is due to ongoing trauma and adversity or just living in the world today - stress is something we need to consider as a factor that is impacting children at school. When our bodies are flooded regularly with stress hormone, it can begin to affect us long term. It impacts our thoughts, beliefs, responses, behaviour and our health.

“Stress sends a signal to the brain that tells us there is danger around.”

Stress sends a signal to the brain that tells us there is danger around. This activates our survival response which triggers us to go in to fight, flight or freeze. For children, this might look like shouting and swearing, flipping tables, and responding with anger (fight mode) or running off around school, hiding in toilets and refusing to do their work (flight mode) or shutting down, staring in to space and not responding (freeze mode). These behaviours are a direct response to the feeling of being unsafe, threatened or overwhelmed in some way.

When James is struggling with his maths work, it feels overwhelming and hard. He feels he is not good enough and so his survival responses kick in and he responds with flight mode by walking out and refusing to do it. The same is true for Sarah whose dad is an alcoholic and who frequently hides under her bed to stay safe when he is drunk. Her brain is always assessing her surrounding for the next sign of danger and her survival responses hijack her behaviour, so when the dinner hall is too noisy and she feels anxious, she hides herself in the toilet and refuses to come out. These are automatic responses the brain activates to help children cope with difficult situations and is something we must consider in our approaches.

The truth is, many of the children in your class will be responding with their survival responses and this will impact their ability to flourish in school. In fact, the very part of the brain we expect children to be using at school, their pre-frontal cortex, or as I call it, their rational brain, is switched off when a child is responding with their survival responses. This means they cannot reason, reflect, have empathy for others, problem solve, self-regulate, or use their memory and recall. So, when we talk about supporting children's mental health and wellbeing in school, it starts here. If we know that children are coming into school feeling overwhelmed, their stress levels are high, and their survival responses are in the driver's seat. Our focus then needs to be on helping them calm that brain down, to access the rational, thinking part of the brain they need for school. Alongside safe, nurturing connective relationships which are vital, the classroom can play a huge role in this.



Classrooms

Classrooms have the potential to be places that inspire, nurture and calm children. They could be designed around their emotional needs and consider science, contributing to feelings of safety and reducing stress. However, many increase stress levels, are overwhelming, cluttered, and poorly designed. Children spend 39 weeks of their year in their classrooms and yet, these often contribute to the problem rather than help it. The conventional standard we have accepted as the norm is modelled on post war classrooms that were designed for a completely different era.

The plastic chairs we still use today, are a version of a post war chair designed by Robin Day in 1963. The lighting, furniture and overall design need to be re-invented to reflect the needs of the children who use them in 2023. If the numbers of children struggling with adversity, trauma and high stress levels are rising and which triggers them to work from a place of survival and respond with fight, flight or freeze, then shouldn't our classrooms be designed to help calm the brain, reduce stress hormone and provide places for them to self-regulate and manage their internal states? I think so. But what is it that does not work and what can we do to change it?

What is not working

“Classroom chairs are uncomfortable, and we all know it!”

The biggest issue with our current classrooms are the chairs; let's be honest, classroom chairs are uncomfortable, and we all know it. Yet we still expect our children to sit on them all day and then we tell them off for fidgeting, swinging, and sitting on their knees. We have asked hundreds of children who have reported things like, “*the hole in the back digs into me*” or, “*they are too small*” or, “*they are uncomfortable*”, and they openly voice their frustrations and yet we have not changed our offering since we swapped from wooden chairs to plastic in the 60's!

The tables we use in classrooms are also a factor to consider. Due to their shape, they are difficult to configure in the classroom, they take up space and are not very practical. Children tell us they are too low, hurt the top of their legs, and that they are forced to sit too close to the people next to them. Teachers tell us they get backache due to constantly bending down and get bruises on their legs from knocking into the corners. The configuration and style of table is also a problem for children with mobility or disability issues, which does not reflect inclusive practice.

The colours we use in classrooms are also something to reflect on. Although the intention is to make a classroom welcoming, the purpose behind the colours has become lost. In most schools, the colours clash and have not been paired together to create a theme but instead, chosen because that was all that was available in the stock cupboard. This is especially true for display boards that can often become chaotic and overwhelming filled with different coloured laminated prompts, double backed work and washing lines that hang across the room. As a result, the room becomes overwhelming, with conflicting bright colours that can leave children feeling unsettled and anxious. This is particularly true for children with autism, ADHD and for those who have experienced trauma.

The Therapeutic Classroom:

My concept of a *Therapeutic Classroom* has evolved after years of teaching my Therapeutic Teaching Course where I offer a step-by-step approach to becoming more therapeutic, trauma informed and attachment aware. Alongside looking at school culture, teacher skillset, behaviour policies and responses, we also looked at environment.

“A therapeutic classroom is first and foremost an environment designed to make children feel safe.”

A therapeutic classroom is first and foremost an environment designed to make children feel safe. It is a homely space that helps calm the brain and activate the rational thinking response. The concept is less about it looking like a normal ‘classroom’ and more about being an inspirational place to work that children want to be in every day.

Everything about the space has been considered from the colours on the wall, chairs, and soft furnishings. However, it is easy to see a nice-looking classroom and forget about the science that informs it.

Every aspect of our classroom has been designed with inclusion and mental health in mind. Pulling from childhood trauma theory, attachment theory and neuroscience, everything is purposeful and intentional. The rooms are painted in neutral colours and display boards are removed, we introduce plants, soft lighting, and calm areas in every room and include soft furnishings such as blankets, sensory lighting, cushions, and teddies to encourage children to self-sooth and regulate as part of the offer of the classroom.

The biggest difference in our therapeutic classrooms, are the tables and chairs. We introduce flexible seating which allow children to choose different types of seating to meet their needs at different intervals during the day. Sitting in the same place every day all day is not conducive to learning for some children (though others love it) so I wanted to give children the opportunity to identify where feels best for them to sit depending on their internal state that lesson. A child who has had a difficult morning and comes in feeling anxious might prefer to sit on a high bar table with just one other peer for the morning, to help reduce that feeling of being overwhelmed by lots of children sat next to them. They might later feel sociable and settled and prefer to sit on a small round table with four peers.



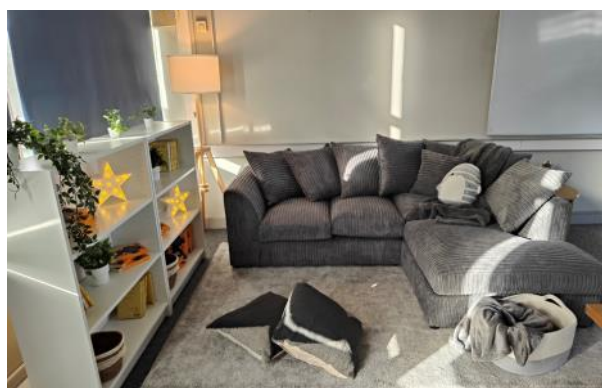
Our rooms have a mixture of round tables, standing and bar tables, dining tables and floor seating which encourages children to self-select their own preferences where possible. They are designed to reflect what you might find in a home and are large enough for children to be able to sit comfortably and have the physical space around them that many children need. They free up floor space, making the room more accessible for children with mobility issues, helping them

access more of their environment. The chairs are also a huge part of our therapeutic classrooms and are soft and comfortable as standard! They also aid self-regulation because children can run their hands over the material to help them self-sooth during lessons.



Our rooms include a calm area made up of a sofa or armchairs and bookcases. This replaces 'reading corners' which are usually made up of old cushions and odd bits and bobs teachers have found to piece together the area. Instead, we invest in good quality armchairs or sofas, again like those you would find at home, and create safe areas children can use throughout their day.

The calm area can be used to help children self-regulate if they become unsettled, to do 121 work or even as another place to learn in the classroom. This area is essential to a therapeutic classroom as it helps children to manage their own emotional states within the environment. If a child is feeling overwhelmed or angry, they can move over to this area, grab a blanket and *opt out* of the lesson whilst still listening and being part of the class. There is no judgement around this because the room is designed around these needs. Then when the child is ready, they can come back to the learning space easily. This is so much more inclusive than a child needing to leave the room to regulate and then struggle to come back in!



What is the impact?

Over the last year we have transformed rooms up and down the country and the impact is always the same. It does not matter if they are an inner-city school, suburban school, one form or two form, SEMH or preparatory school (and we have done them all!); there is a universal need that these classrooms meet. Teachers see a significant impact the very next day and report that classes are calmer, noise levels are lower, children are more engaged and those children with additional needs or SEMH needs can access the environment more productively. Every single child tells us that the rooms feel more comfortable, and safe! Yes - they use the word safe! Children who refused to come to school before the classroom was changed, now come in every day and teachers themselves feel happier in the space.

“Our classrooms look amazing but more importantly our children feel amazing in them. Their levels of interconnection and collaboration have rocketed in just one day. Watching them all setting in to the favoured positions has been so rewarding and demonstrated the impact of the environment on learning.”

Prep school Headmistress

“It is really hard to put in to words. We have happy children who love coming to school and want to learn. We have children who are no longer attacking staff, kicking in walls and trashing rooms.”

**Personalised Learning Pathways manager
Special school**

Small things you can do

If you are inspired by this article but can't replace the furniture try these top tips:

- Declutter
- Introduce blankets, cushions, and teddies for self-regulation (in all year groups)
- Add some soft lighting and turn those strobe lights off! – LED lights, lamps, and fairy lights with a warm bulb work well
- Reduce what is on display boards and use a neutral colour theme
- Create a calm area with a sofa/ armchairs, rugs and blankets. If you have the budget to buy one great, but you could also source well looked after ones second hand
- Add some fake plants to help calm the space down and bring the outdoors in.



If you want to know more

Watch our Reinventing Classrooms series on our YouTube Channel- where we transform the environments of different schools up and down the country.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCb8JEjwiUYF6yp-vs3joBHw>

Listen to our podcast: <https://open.spotify.com/show/6GIhyufeXpIldtFPPIUWiXO?si=7217eb8b70784209>

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References

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/well-being/mental-health-statistics>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/robin-day-designer-best-known-for-his-polypropylene-stacking-chair-2138031.html>

About me:

Shahana Knight is an award-winning childhood trauma specialist and the founder and director of TPC therapy Ltd, a mental health service for children and young people. Shahana's work is informed by her own experience of childhood trauma. She works within the education and care sector as well as with charities. She is the founder of the 'therapeutic schools approach' through which she is working with schools across England to put children's wellbeing at the core of education and therapeutic classrooms where she is transforming UK classrooms into trauma informed spaces.

Shahana is pioneering a vision for all schools to become trauma informed and therapeutic. Her unique approach is making a significant impact and has been recognised by BBC Newsround and BBC Teach who have both done features in which Shahana has appeared. Shahana writes a regular segment in Headteacher Update, the national magazine for primary schools where she shares therapeutic teaching ideas and techniques. She has also been a governor of two primary schools and has sat on two foster care panels.



Inclusive classrooms

Sara Hawker is the Lead Occupational Therapist and Advanced Sensory Integration Practitioner, working within the Communication and Interactions team, across Hampshire for students in education between Year R-25 years of age, who have sensory differences and difficulties which impact on their ability to engage in education.

Sonia Aurora is a Specialist Teacher Adviser for the Communication and Interaction team, working across Hampshire for students with EHCP from Year 3 until college. Sonia works with the Sensory C&I sensory team, having passed the Module 1 post graduate course in Sensory Integration with SIE.

“Aims to promote inclusive classrooms where all students feel valued and supported to achieve their full potential.”

The UK English school curriculum aims to promote inclusive classrooms where all students feel valued and supported to achieve their full potential.

Inclusive education involves creating a learning environment that is accessible and welcoming to all students, regardless of their background, needs, or abilities and includes helping those with neurodivergent conditions such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and Dyslexia, receive the support they need to succeed.

Creating an inclusive classroom requires a combination of strategies and approaches that are tailored to meet the specific needs of students with different learning abilities and styles, which when implemented help create a safe learning space for students:

Build a positive and inclusive classroom culture: This can be achieved through collaborative learning activities, promoting positive relationships between students, and fostering a sense of belonging in the classroom.

Identify and reinforce positive behaviours, rather than simply punishing negative behaviours: This can be particularly effective for neurodiverse students, who may struggle with behavioural challenges.

Use differentiated instruction: This involves tailoring instruction to meet the needs of individual students. Differentiated instruction can be achieved by providing alternative ways of learning, modifying the pace and level of instruction, and using various teaching strategies and materials.

Provide assistive technology: Assistive technology can help students with additional needs to access the curriculum and improve their learning outcomes. Examples of assistive technology include text-to-speech software, speech-to-text software, and digital graphic organisers.

Promote self-regulation: Self-regulation strategies such as mindfulness, and deep breathing, can help all students manage their emotions and stay focused in the classroom.

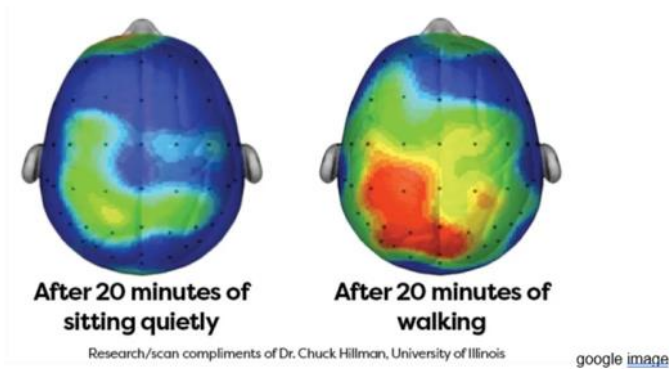
Provide regular feedback: Regular feedback can help students track their progress and adjust their learning strategies. Feedback can be provided through verbal feedback, written comments, or self-assessment tools.

Encourage movement: Sitting still has been our dominant model for learning in school, evidence-based research definitively shows that movement and learning are connected.

Flexible seating arrangements: Providing flexible seating arrangements to accommodate students' physical and learning needs. This could include standing desks, beanbag chairs, and comfortable seating.

Sensory support: you will find many students are sensitive to sensory stimuli, such as smell, noise, light, or touch. Providing accommodations to support students experiencing adverse impact to their environment, such as noise-cancelling headphones or visual aids, can help these students feel more comfortable and focused on the classroom if they experience sensory difficulties and differences.

“Sensory integration is a specialist and individualised Approach.”



Sensory processing is the way our brains receive, organise and respond to sensory information from the environment. Sensory processing difficulties and differences can affect students in a variety of ways, such as difficulty paying attention, regulating their behaviour, interacting with others or not being able to tolerate being in a space at risk of unwanted touch.

It is important to ensure that the environment is inclusive and supportive of students with sensory processing difficulties. Targeted support can be provided to reduce anxiety and stress of the student’s school experience.

Provide a sensory-friendly environment:

Create a classroom environment that is calm, organised, and predictable. This can be achieved by reducing visual and auditory distractions, organising materials and furniture, and using visual schedules.

Use sensory tools: Sensory tools such as fidget toys, can help students to regulate their sensory input and improve their attention and behaviour.

Provide sensory breaks: Sensory breaks can help students to regulate their sensory input and improve their attention and behaviour. Sensory breaks can include activities such as stretching, jumping, or deep breathing.

Use multisensory teaching strategies:

Multisensory teaching strategies can help students to engage with learning and improve their understanding. For example, using visual aids, hands-on activities, or movement-based activities can help students to learn and retain information.

Sensory integration is an approach to support students with sensory processing disorders, it is important to note that sensory integration is a specialist and individualised approach. Teachers should work in collaboration with occupational therapists or other trained professionals to develop and implement a personalised sensory programme.

Supporting individuals with sensory processing disorders with the correct plan, environment and sensory programme can lead to improved classroom engagement, participation, decreased anxiety, and better daily functioning. An effective inclusive education space will allow students to make their own choices, explore their likes and dislikes, maintain their regulation and increase self-confidence.

Sensory spaces can play a critical role in meeting these needs, but their success depends on joint working and collaboration between students, teachers, key stakeholders, and professionals in their design and use.

Time to reflect

Take a moment and look at your classroom, the corridors, the playground! What do you see? Tables and chairs, busy walls and shelves, bags and coats on pegs... or on the floor! Space to run around, sometimes equipment to climb or a place where to sit outside!

Do you ever think how the environment around your students affects their daily activities? Children process the world around them through their senses and when their senses threshold is *just right*, they can listen, remember, think and learn. But when the environment is not right, you may see a student who is distracted, withdrawn, or seeking more sensory feedback. When the environment is not right, a student may fidget more, avoid tasks, struggle to regulate their emotions. When the environment is not right, a student will find it much harder to concentrate, let alone learn.

But how to cater in one space for all the different sensory needs that students may have? Where a third of your class need a quiet environment to think and stay focused, others need noise to stimulate their thoughts and stay on track! Where a third need the rigid structure of a chair and table, others work better on the floor!

“Is it an inclusive classroom that provides opportunities for varied sensory preferences?”

So, look again at your classroom! Is it an inclusive classroom that provides opportunities for varied sensory preferences? If it is already inclusive then you will know how beneficial the environment is for your students: improved regulation, concentration, and learning outcomes! If your classroom could be more inclusive, here are some examples to guide you:

Environments to suit varied posture preferences:

- carpet space to sit on hard floor, lie down on the tummy, sit on the floor leaning on furniture or the wall to provide back support
- bean bag or sofa, soft cushion providing an opportunity to feel grounded when on the floor
- chair with a back support or higher stools without a back and with foot supports
- standing up, using a high table-top / standing desk.

It is not always possible to adapt the classroom in terms of where the students can complete their work. It depends on what space is available. The bigger the room, the easier it is to create different zones. It is also easier to create such rooms in primary settings where students spend the majority of their time in one classroom. If the classrooms are too small or the setting is a secondary school, you can still create one inclusive room. It could be the room where students come to self-regulate.

Environments to suit varied visual preferences:

- check the lighting – Can the lighting be altered or is it, too bright, dark or are the lights flickering?
- check for direct sunlight or sun reflection in the room. Do you have blinds on your windows? Does the sunlight reflect off the floor if it is not carpeted?
- check your displays on walls and ceiling. Is there too much information? What is it you want the students to focus on?
- check your shelves and desks. If very full and cluttered, could the shelves be covered or reorganised?
- check for possible distracting patterns or colours
- have highlighters or coloured papers for those who need visual stimulation but also plain paper for those who get overwhelmed by colour or patterns.

Environments to suit varied auditory preferences:

- organise the room so that students can be busy talking and sharing ideas in one corner whilst others can work in a quieter space. Soft furnishing or screens can help divide spaces and absorb some of the sound waves
- activities may require louder noise than others—warn the students that it is going to get noisier. Students, who are sensitive to sound, may need to work in a quieter space or use ear defenders
- offer calming activities pre and post exposure to louder noises. Ideas can be found on our Moodle
- use a noise thermometer to vary the noise level in the classroom. Look online for free apps
- check noise outside your room – close the door or window if external noises distract students in the classroom
- move sensitive students away from noise sources such as fans, buzzing from electrical equipment or the dripping tap
- warn students about possible unusual noise such as building work, lawnmower, planned fire alarm bells.

Environments to suit varied regulation preferences:

- use proprioceptive activities (using joints and muscles) - think of activities that require students to use their muscles and put some pressure on their joints - stretching to grab an item higher up, holding and carrying items, organising the body, moving about (delivering messages, getting resources), giving out resources, shoulder rolls, hand and arm stretching, chair push-ups.
- use the outdoors - space for movement (climbing, jumping, running, skipping, playing ball games) but also space for sitting, space to be quieter, space in the shade, garden space to look at wildlife. Sand tray, water tray.
- complete the school daily mile and Brain Gym exercises between subjects.
- when using a space with no physical structure, some children may need a visual to mark a spot - use a hula hoop, a mat, a cushion or tile.
- have varied fidgets available in the classroom: offer different textures, soft, prickly, heavy or smooth.
- offer varied thickness of pen and pencils - with and without grips.
- offer varied papers: thicker lines, wider spacing, coloured paper.
- check the temperature of your room: is it too hot, too cold?
- think about water breaks and snack time, as well as toilet breaks. Students will need these, some more often than others.



The ideas above cover most students' sensory preferences in everyday classrooms. They are inexpensive and can easily be actioned. Having a sensory checklist can be an effective way of reviewing how inclusive the classrooms are. Checklists can also be reviewed during the year. Remember small adaptations to the environment can have a big impact on learning and regulation.

Students who require a more specific sensory diet can be provided with their own sensory profile. Knowledge on how to support these students, allows teachers to understand whether the student is over or under responsive. The C&I sensory OT team has created resources that are universally available to help schools identify all students' preferences, assess their space and target where to adapt the environment. They can be found on our **Moodle** under the Occupational Therapy and Sensory regulation course <https://sta.mylearningapp.com/course/view.php?id=18>. If you are from an HCC school or college and you do not have a login, please use Guest Access to enter the STAS Key Information Course to complete the on-line form to request a login.

Here are other adaptations to the environment. These are more specific to individual needs rather than the whole class:

Tents: a pop-up tent or a dark space can support students who need a break from visual stimuli. Another way of providing a dark space is to Velcro® some fabric to a desk, like some curtains!

A cosy corner with bean bags, blanket or soft objects that are weighted for deep pressure.

Gym ball: to sit on, roll on.

Softer textures to sit on.

Oral activities: drinking through a straw, blowing bubbles, eating crunchy or chewy snacks, chew toys.


Check where the child is sitting: is the area full of distractions?

Some students have strong reactions to smells: get to know the child's preferences and support their sensory needs. For example, the smell of the food in the canteen may be overwhelming or trigger a negative memory. Check our sensory environment checklist in the Moodle for more suggestions.

Is the uniform comfortable? Is your uniform policy flexible for those who dislike certain touch sensations, like zips or long sleeves? Have you considered making accommodation to allow an under-armour compression top/legging to enable uniform to be worn by preventing unwanted light touch from labels or scratchy materials.

Sensory circuits: a great way to include movement, organisation and regulation, provide targeted support for those who need it and offer extension activities for those who need to be challenged.

Interested in finding out more? Here are some websites and free courses:



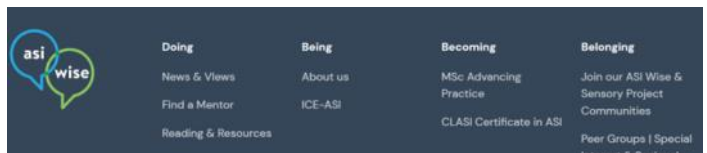
Sensory Integration Education:
www.sensoryintegrationeducation.com



Sensory Diet Cards and Movement Breaks:
www.griffinot.com/sensory-diet-cards-and-videos-free



Sensory Ladders Open Access - anyone - anywhere - anytime - ASI Wise: <https://sensoryproject.org/2021/07/01/sensory-ladders-open-access-anyone-anywhere-anytime>



Why It Works - The Walking Classroom:
www.thewalkingclassroom.org/why-it-works-details

Stanford study finds walking improves creativity:
<https://news.stanford.edu/2014/04/24/walking-vs-sitting-042414>

Merriman, W. González-Toro, C.M. Cherubini, J. Physical activity in the classroom. *Kappa Delta Pi. Rec.* 2020, 56, 164–169. [\[Google Scholar\]](#)

How to Supercharge Your Student's Brain in Just 15 Minutes - Creating Positive Futures <https://creatingpositivefutures.com/how-to-supercharge-your-teens-brain-in-just-15-minutes/%23:~:text=The%20students%20who%20walked%20for,activates%20the%20brain%20even%20more.>

Movement in the classroom – TED Talk <https://youtu.be/hBSVZdTQmDs>

Exercise and the brain TED Talk <https://youtu.be/LdDnPYr6R0o>

National Autistic Society. (2020). Secondary schools and colleges. www.autism.org.uk

What is neurodiversity? Explaining how some people's brains work differently - The Brain Charity <https://www.thebraincharity.org.uk/what-is-neurodiversity>

SEN support in Early Years

The **Early Years Advisory Team (EYAT)** works as part of Hampshire's Services for Young Children (SfYC). Part of our remit is to support outcomes for vulnerable children, including children working at SEN Support through our work with early years settings, including childminders, and schools.

Within the team we have several strategic groups which are designed to focus closely on the quality of provision in early years and outcomes for cohorts of children. One of these is the **EYAT SEND Strategic Group**, currently made up of five members, including a Speech and Language Therapist and a member of the SfYC Inclusion Team.

Our work involves raising the profile of inclusion and provision for children with SEND, within the context of the EYFS framework. We work with settings and schools through training, network sessions, briefings, and face to face support. We focus on high quality inclusive provision and practice to ensure that every child reaches their full potential.

We offer a wide range of training for practitioners and teachers supporting children working across the EYFS. We can offer bespoke training and we also have a library of training packages; including training provided by the SfYC Speech and Language Therapists.

Keeping Strategies in Mind

Keep resources close to hand

Have the child's key visuals, resources and equipment, close at hand for quick and easy access.



Facial Expressions

Be aware of your facial expression (an angry or displeased face to some children can trigger fight or flight). Sometimes our fear or frustration may be interpreted as anger or threat to a child.



'Y' is for you... You are the intervention. You are the change. Your relationship with a young person is more powerful than any individual strategy, resource or therapy session. How you greet them, look at them, listen to them, speak to them and support them will create opportunities for development and growth.' – *The A to Z of Nurturing*

Give Clear instructions

Ensure instructions evoke a 'mental picture' that supports what is needed, using positive instructions in a calm but sure voice. Tell the child what to do with their body, for example:

'sit down' rather than 'stop jumping.'
 "walk" rather than "no running" "put your arms down by your side" rather than "don't raise your hand like that".

Find resources to support inclusion in Year R, on SFYC Moodle.



We have put together some **practical ideas** for teachers, to help **support the inclusion of children with working at SEN Support in Year R**: <https://hants.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/Chil8684/EehWEmKgpEdBqr1wfWGBtFIBALd6UQAaLviwUOGDIAT0cA?e=p94AtB>

Have a safe/ cosy spaces



Ensure access to safe and secure spaces for the child. These can be designed with the child in mind. For example, cosy and soft, dark and enclosed,

Recognise Behaviour as a stress response

Remember that when a child is in a 'stress response' they find listening challenging, therefore, lots of talking (especially questions) can trigger avoidance of a task or unwanted behaviour, so co-regulation, visual information and minimised vocalisation can help.



Breathing Strategies

If appropriate, encourage deep-breathing in and out, by modelling this yourself, the child may join in – blowing bubbles, feathers, mobiles can be helpful.

Research shows that taking deep breaths in and out, is one of the most effective ways of bringing the brain and nervous system back into a ready state and regulation.

This supports the calming or regulation of both adult and child.

Be Consistent

Be consistent in word and deed. Keep trying as some strategies can take longer to take effect than we would think or hope. Even the change of staff implementing a successful strategy can take a while to become successful again.

Course: Help for Year R Teachers – supporting vulnerable children in Year R
<https://sfyctraining.hants.gov.uk/enrol/index.php?id=262>

Click here for our Checklist for Year R teachers: https://hants.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/Chil8684/EVIEzV0Yn_FEjgGHWA2XiY4Bdeli1DM5RaXzRN7UGf7_fw?e=DZzZHV

Recommended Reading

Child Development: An illustrated guide Carolyn Meggitt

Who is it for?
 Early Years practitioners, teachers, parents, and health workers wishing to extend their professional development and that of their team.

Overview:
 This book benefits from Carolyn Meggitt's vast experience as an Early Years teacher. It will enable you to build up a picture of a child's progress throughout their development and guide you through the age-related behaviour to expect from a growing child. It will support you to identify a child who, for some reason, may not be following developmental milestones.

The safety, ICT and nutrition guidelines provided throughout offer useful tips to bear in mind when working with children.

- Simple explanations and diagrams make this an easy read
- Practical examples of each stage of development

SfYC Moodle materials

As part of our suite of materials on Moodle, we have a video presentation on **Using Visual Supports**. Our Speech and Language Therapist Helen Gibbons delivered a live input during this term's Supporting Transitions for vulnerable children Network.

To access the Using Visual Supports video that accompanies the session please follow this link: <https://youtu.be/VISdFn2EMmE>

Next term our network will focus on: **Co-regulation**.

To access all resources in this section please scan the QR code or follow the link:



Course: Help for Year R Teachers – supporting vulnerable children in Year R: <https://sfyctraining.hants.gov.uk/course/view.php?id=262>

Useful websites

The **Tiny Happy People** website is designed to help parents develop their child's language skills. Visit the website to explore simple activities and play ideas to share with parents and look at videos that help parents find out about babies and toddlers' amazing early development.



Deborah and Oliver

Meet Deborah and her 3-year-old son Oliver, who has Down syndrome.

Down syndrome and communication: Meet 3-year-old Oliver and his mum Deborah - BBC Tiny Happy People www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/meet-oliver-deborah/zfwkvwx



Baby Sign and

How to use objects, pictures and signs to help babies communicate

Expert advice on using alternative modes of communication to help children's early language skills.

Communication: How to use objects, pictures and signs to help babies' communication - BBC Tiny Happy People www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/different-ways-to-communicate/z7nm2v4



All about 'All Aboard!'

The 'All Aboard' training - designed to support understanding of inclusion in Year R.

During this full-day course, delegates can explore ways to make the Year R classroom more inclusive. This course provides practical ideas and suggestions to make sure every child is supported and included.

Through training input and tasks, we will explore how to create an enabling environment, be an inclusive key person and understand the importance of learning about the unique child.

This training will support you to:

- have a deeper understanding of what 'inclusion' is and an awareness of the possible barriers to inclusion in Year R
- learn what an 'inclusive environment' looks and feels like, including practical tips to strengthen your classroom provision
- explore the role of the adult to ensure that all children are learning and developing to their full potential
- consider the unique child and what may support them to fully access the EYFS curriculum.

Book via the Learning Zone. Contact: heytc@hants.gov.uk

Transition is a process, not an event

As professionals, we always strive to ensure transition is as smooth as possible for all children and their families, but especially for those most vulnerable. Working closely with families and other professionals who know children well, is a key to success. Where teachers have generalised knowledge of child development, parents have *specialised* knowledge of *their* child's development. By bringing that knowledge together, a successful plan can be co-constructed. Plans can be developed and agreed through a TPA (Transition Partnership Agreement) or, for children with EHCPs, through individualised transitions meetings.

Portage: many children that are identified with a Special Educational Need in preschool have support from Portage Inclusion Practitioners (PIPs). PIPs provide ongoing intensive support to families, to support learning at home but also visit children in preschools and provide advice to practitioners. PIPs have a wealth of knowledge about the child and family that will be invaluable to share with teachers and SENDCos. Where a child might need extra support for a successful transition, practitioners can talk to PIPs about providing additional support for this process.

SfYC Moodle: Many of you will have reflected on what works well, and what could be improved, based on your experiences of last year's transition into Year R, into Year One and beyond. You may have already begun to plan the way forward for improvements, especially for those children who will need extra support to have a successful transition. Services for Young Children (SfYC) are continually updating our Moodle with a wealth of transition resources that are accessible, downloadable, and freely available to all Hampshire schools and settings.

To access all the resources on the SfYC Moodle follow this link: <https://sfyctraining.hants.gov.uk> and then enter your school login details.

If you do not have access to the Services for Young Children Moodle, or you need help to recover your username and password, please email: sfycmoodle@hants.gov.uk

Find transitions resources:

Course: Transitions <https://sfyctraining.hants.gov.uk/course/view.php?id=137>

Resources to support inclusion in Year R:

- free to access
- five modules available
- share with your teams
- network sessions to support
- members of the Early Years Advisory team available to support network events.



To contact us, please email with “Year R support” in the subject line:

Lisa Sancisi lisa.sancisi@hants.gov.uk

Laurenn Thornton
lauren.thornton@hants.gov.uk



Embracing students with SEN in science



[inclusion
Education]

“My mantra is to teach how I’d like my son to be taught, and that is with the thought that you never know what is going on behind closed doors.” Those closed doors might be the student having a difficult home life – which I think is drummed into us a lot as teachers, especially during our training. But we should also consider it might be an undiagnosed, or unrecognised learning need.

For a number of students, especially those with SEN, science can be a tricky subject to grasp due to the large variety of skills required. The students who love science tend to do so because of the practicals. If you think back to your own science lessons, I’m sure it’s the lessons with the Bunsen burners you remember most fondly.

When students get to secondary school a lot of students’ learning needs have been picked up by our primary colleagues. In secondary, we do our best to build on that and of course, we could not do it without our wonderful TAs.

I’m sure, in a majority of schools, there are students on roll on a wait list to be diagnosed with autism, ADHD, dyslexia or something similar. Likewise, I’m sure there are a number of students where staff have spoken to the parents about the child having or potentially having autism, ADHD, dyslexia or something similar and the parents have refused or do not want to take it further.

I wonder how many students there are where it has not crossed the minds of parents or staff that they might be neurodivergent. Many people, like me, were not diagnosed until adulthood.

This comes back to my thinking of not knowing what’s going on behind closed doors – you could almost think of those closed doors as the mind. What if you taught and treated everyone as if they might have an undiagnosed neurodivergence or an unrecognised need? What if I recognise that they might know how they learn best and give them a chance to prove that?

“Do simple things to show I was paying attention to them, and I Care.”

To create an open and inclusive environment within my science lab, I make sure I am always welcoming to students, I always say hello to them and greet them as they come in (which I’m sure is standard practice). If they’ve mentioned an event or something to me, I’ll try and ask them about it, for example, “Hey, Gary, how did football practice go last night?” or “Morning Poppy, how was your birthday at the weekend?” It could even be something as simple as “Hi Leo, did you remember to go to English and get your coat back after the lesson on Monday?” Just simple things to show I was paying attention to them, and I care. If anything negative happened in the last lesson, it is forgotten, and we’ve moved on. It’s not mentioned unless they mention it.

If I have to talk to anyone about anything more private, about their needs, or maybe something I spoke to their parents or tutor about, I’ll get the class started on a starter task and wander the room, chat with a few of the students, and then make my way to those I need to speak with. They will feel less targeted then.

I keep up the welcoming attitude even with the late or truant students who get brought in by other members of staff. I find dealing with the truancy issues at the end of the class and avoiding the blow-up at the beginning is key to avoiding them walking straight back out again, because the best place is for them to be in my class and willing to learn.

If students are attending some lessons, even if they are struggling to attend all lessons, their punishment should not be to remove them from the lessons they are attending in order to try and make them attend other lessons. That does not work. Putting students on isolations, or exclusions I understand, but if they have lessons where the subject is taught by multiple teachers and they only attend lessons for some teachers and not others, forbidding them from attending the lessons they will go to until they attend the other teachers' lessons is not the way to go. This only serves to have the student miss further lessons, get further behind and create more of a negative connotation with that subject. The focus should be on building the relationship between the student and the other teacher.

Relationships between students and teachers are so important. Showing that you as the teacher trust the student is so vital to creating that relationship with that student. It is why I will try to let a student sit with their friends on a seating plan unless I see it is unsuitable. I've had students absolutely thrive being sat with their friends, because they wanted to prove they were worthy of my trust, going from being moved down a set into my class, to being one of the class's top performers.

“I don't think any student comes to school with the intention of 'misbehaving' or 'being naughty'...”

I do not think any student comes to school with the intention of 'misbehaving' or 'being naughty' – and I tell my students that. I think some

students are better suited to school than others – and that's why I try to make school and science lessons fun. I've had students come to me and my lessons absolutely hating science, having really bad prior experiences with the lessons and the teachers. This includes teachers not catering to their needs.

Students have admitted truanting lessons, and when they did turn up, they either did not understand anything, because of how much they had missed, so they messed around, or they just left soon after because it was overwhelming.

I find there is nothing more boring and uninspiring than writing loads of things down that students are likely never to reference or read again, and cognitively, it does not really do much for them. They are much more invested in the lesson if you make it relative to them and their interests. Make it silly, make it funny and own it. All writing things down shows is that the student can write things down, and for some, the act of writing things takes so much work that actually, none of what they have written has been retained!

I once had two low-prior attaining Year 9 students in detention and explained collision theory to them by linking it to celebrities they liked. It was so silly. Sure, it was a detention, and some might say, well they were in detention, they should have been punished, sat in silence, going over notes perhaps, but it was far more beneficial for me to sit with them, for us to laugh and for me to draw with my whiteboard pen all over the table and explain it to them in terms they could grasp whilst linking it to these celebrities. How do I know? Because two years later, these two students could still both perfectly recite collision theory to the entire class, remembering everything I'd told them in a 30-minute detention. We had not even gone back over it since then! They were so proud of themselves!

“Students seem to prefer to ask questions at ‘table level’ rather than ask questions ‘across the class’.”

I love using my whiteboard markers on the table. In fact, learning to write upside down, so my writing is student-facing, is something that has been beyond useful and for some reason, never fails to impress students who have never seen me do it before – it is a great talking point to get students engaged with what you’re doing. It’s great for scaffolding and modelling, especially when you can gather students around a table and really get on their level. Students feel much more comfortable asking questions like this, rather than out loud, I find. They seem to prefer to ask questions at *table level* rather than ask questions ‘across the class’, and you will sometimes find small groups might start talking among themselves to work out the answer to a problem.

Another good thing about this kind of work is because you’re sat among them, you can hear the conversations much easier, can address any off-topic talk, but can pick up any misconceptions and confusion, can set challenge-level work (you can write more on the table if need be) and you can expand upon diagrams and work as if you are using the board to tailor it to an individual student/group. I love using this for things like balancing chemical equations – I start on the whiteboard, give the class a few minutes to have a go, and then go around the room working on tables where necessary. I’ll give more challenging examples to those who have got it, and model and scaffold to different degrees to those who need it. Then I’ll call everyone around one table to consolidate the learning.

Practicals can be where it gets tricky. I always demonstrate my practicals, and I always demonstrate safety. I always say to my students, if I expect it from them, I expect it from me too. So, if I’m expecting them to tie up their long hair and wear goggles correctly, it would be unfair for me to walk around the lab with my long hair loose and wearing my goggles on my forehead. I always make a big thing of goggles being on the forehead being my pet peeve, and I get at least one student a lesson to recite it to the class. It’s silly, but all of my students know it!

Students with SEN can find this very difficult and dysregulating, so I always make sure to check in with them. I always have spare hair bands, and let my students know they can take a breather, as long as someone from their group is available to manage the practical. I always decide the groups, and ensure they are reasonably sized for the practical. I usually decide them by table, as that is easiest. Equipment is laid out around the room so there’s no crush. For anything important, I allocate a ‘person in charge’ – they need to make sure that an important piece of equipment comes back – and I always swap the person around.

“Sometimes, students do need a minute to pause. Sometimes, they panic and think they can’t do something.”

I always make sure instructions are easily visible, and that I am circling the room to ensure everyone is on task and they know what they are doing. If anyone is stuck, overwhelmed, or struggling, I am on hand to help. Sometimes, students do need a minute to pause. Sometimes, they panic and think they cannot do something. I always ask them to talk me through what they are doing, what’s next? Have they tried it? Sometimes a little encouragement is all they need. I never rush my students. Safety is paramount. Students with SEN can be more nervous than others and need that extra support.

“Further struggles SEN students may have might be needing to have output to get input.”

Another thing students with SEN can struggle with is regulating themselves in the science lab. For example, some students might want a comfort toy or item with them, but for safety and to avoid damage, it might need to go away during the practical. I will suggest that they put it in a bag or coat, but some students do not like the idea of their item being stuffed in a bag.

I have had a stuffed bear take pride of place on my chair and my desk before, being given the role of chief lab observer. It was a small gesture, but it made the student more comfortable. Some students need to move, often they will do this by rocking on their chair, clicking a pen, or fiddling with their pencil case or anything within reach. I will modify for them by allowing them to stand up in a designated area for a drinks break (not during practical). I'll let any other student do this too (many students with SEN do not like to be singled out), but I might let them have a little longer (which we will discreetly agree in advance). This way, it's a signal to me that they're struggling a little, and they recognise it too.

Further struggles students with SEN may have might be needing to have output to get input. So many teachers miss this one, and it is one I used a lot at school. Many students find they need to doodle or draw, in order to be able to focus on what is going on around them – I give my students scrap paper or let them doodle in their own books, in order to keep exercise books looking neat where possible. And when students need a break, I let them step out, unless it is beyond what a short breather can fix, and in that case, I send them to a member of staff who can help. My class should always be a safe space.

Often students are not confident in science, and sometimes, they just need someone to believe in them. Patience and some gentle guidance can get a student so far. I had a student tell me they hated science, and they had never gone since starting secondary school. I got this student going to their science lessons mid summer and for a term of Year 10. By the end of Year 10, they said if they were to rate how they felt about going to science on a 1 to 10 scale, with 1 being they hated it and 10 being they loved it, they rated it a 7 out of 10. I could not believe the progress that the student had made! I told this student that they could just turn up and participate as much or as little as they felt able to, but each little step is progress, if they could communicate with me how they felt that lesson, I would support them. They participated in most practicals, answered questions as best as they could and really tried their best in every lesson.

Sometimes though, not every lesson can be practical, and that's where we have to be imaginative. I've taught resultant forces like it was a dance mat, I've had classes build paper models of cells, used pipe cleaners and beads to teach covalent bonding and had students moving all around my classroom as water particles as I call out various temperatures and they have to decide where they would be in relation to each other. I've had a class come up with a story using their hands to remember the rock cycle – which I then saw multiple students doing in their end-of-topic test weeks later, I've had students present something to the class on a topic from a list of given topics and one group decided to rap their topic. I once made a class of brand new, very shy year 7s stand up and shout sperm cells, penis and vagina until the whole class giggled their silliness out.

None of this is specific to a year group or ability set – because any child could have SEN, just not yet diagnosed. These are things I could do with any group of students, but no one is forced to join in if they are not comfortable. But it makes science fun and memorable, it makes the students want to come to lessons. Isn't that our job, as science teachers, to make science fun and accessible for all?

Jazz McCullough

Science Teacher at 'Inclusion Education' in Basingstoke

Supporting SEN support pupils in secondary schools



Securing excellent provision for SEN pupils, which sustains their ongoing wellbeing and leads to improved levels of achievement remains a priority for Hampshire County Council, as it does nationally for schools.

Consequently, *Beverley Murtagh HIAS Secondary County Inspector Adviser* continued the work begun in 2021-22 in leading HIAS colleagues to develop further, cross-phase and subject-specific work in developing curriculum provision for learners with SEND.

This project was a natural follow on from the work done in 2020/21, which ties in with the overall HIAS strategic priorities:

1. a high-quality curriculum is the lived experience of every child
2. education is a pathway for social justice and equity for all.

Last year, advisers worked in ten secondary schools looking predominately at learners with SEND support in Key Stage 3. This year the County Leadership Team expressed a wish to have some more focused work around transition between primary schools and secondary schools. The following considerations also determined the final shape of this project:

- to further increase expertise in the HIAS team by involving the subject inspectors in carrying out the project this year
- to encourage more cross-phase work around transition

- to provide some webinars in the spring term for transition co-ordinators to explore good practice
- to extend use of the NASEN Teacher Handbook, which explores a huge variety of strategies for use in all subjects on the school curriculum to support learners with SEND learners
- to provide practical examples from the schools involved which will be disseminated via the Moodle in the spring term
- to work with a group of SENCOs to identify and trial the key aspects of an effective Assess, Plan, Review cycle for improving the quality of teaching for learners with SEND and their role within this
- one adviser was to explore Ed Tech with a group of schools.

By September 2022, all the advisers involved had met with the representatives from the schools they were going to involve and completed an outline plan of their project. They also outlined some suggestions for how they might show good impact from the work undertaken. The subject inspectors have shared outcomes via their subject network meetings, subject publications, subject conferences and in producing some information to add to the HIAS Moodle <https://sen.hias.hants.gov.uk>.

Transition webinars were planned for the spring term were un by Beverley Murtagh and Sarah Kiel. The slides for those webinars are also on the HIAS Moodle <https://sen.hias.hants.gov.uk>.

Each strand of the project was extremely valuable and interesting and the outcomes significant. What follows is a series of subject-specific articles, which will be of interest to headteachers, senior leaders, subject leaders and classroom teachers alike.

Enabling accessibility to MFL for learners with SEN



Mark Kingswood, County Inspector/Adviser for MFL explains the work done in Hampshire primary and secondary schools to improve levels of engagement in MFL for pupils with SEND pupils and low prior attainers.

Attainment and progress in Hampshire in MFL is strong overall – but the low uptake and underachievement in sub-groups of pupils mirrors the national trend, in that it is learners with SEN and disadvantaged pupils who statistically engage least well.

MFL is saddled with historical perception and contemporary barriers – specifically the notion that it is *too hard* for learners with SEND and the fact that languages GCSEs are graded more harshly than others.

However, the current GCSE MFL reform and change of specification (first exam in 2026) is predicated on the notion of accessibility, equality and equity, both in terms of learning and in the wider ethnic and cultural sense.

The project consisted of a series of strands of work:

- generic and MFL specific pupil voice
- generic and MFL specific classroom observation
- middle leader coaching, individually and through network meetings in both primary and secondary phase
- resource sharing and creation
- evaluation of impact.

The project was predicated on three key assumptions, all key to securing the engagement and success of learners with SEND in MFL:

- invest time in investigating the best approach to phonics instruction, which is fundamental to MFL teaching. Mastery of this will bring confidence and high levels of esteem to learners who find the pronunciation more difficult to access
- use listening to model language, as opposed to solely as an assessment tool. Research

and pupil voice shows that this is the skill pupils (and especially lower attainers) find hardest. They also associate it most often with *tests* as opposed to with learning

- get them talking. Group work, surveys, speaking the language in a noisy classroom supported by some kind of clear word mat or knowledge organiser. This allows less confident learners to practise their skills under the cover of relative anonymity and without the fear of speaking in front of the whole class.

Pupil voice

Pupil voice took place in a secondary school. Groups of pupils with SEND, and some hard-to-reach learners from Year 7 were spoken to. They explained:

- they appreciate 3-5 retrieval questions at the start of lessons as these help them to refresh their memory of previous learning. They say this is best when it is done consistently across subjects
- they enjoy reading and being read to
- modelling on the board of work is really appreciated and pupils find it very helpful when this is left on the board for reference
- when pupils do not understand work, this is because teachers give lengthy, quite complex explanations, which are too quick and not repeated
- pupils appreciate it when teachers come over and check on individuals to see if they understand. They say they would like the teacher to gather pupils together that do not understand (possibly around a table at the front) to re-explain harder concepts if they do not understand
- pupils said that sometimes when they do not understand, teachers assume this must be linked to behaviour and make comments like “*you should have listened*”. One of the pupils said, “*they say I should have listened but what they are saying is (sometimes literally!) like a foreign language to me*”
- pupils say they are sometimes expected to start a task while the teacher is still explaining it or to listen to an explanation of the next task, while they are still trying to complete the previous one – they cannot manage this
- pupils say they sometimes do not understand marking and feedback and that sometimes this is about presentation and effort rather than the quality and accuracy of their work.

Lesson visits

Lesson visits took place in MFL lessons and other subjects, across a range of schools, both in primary and secondary.

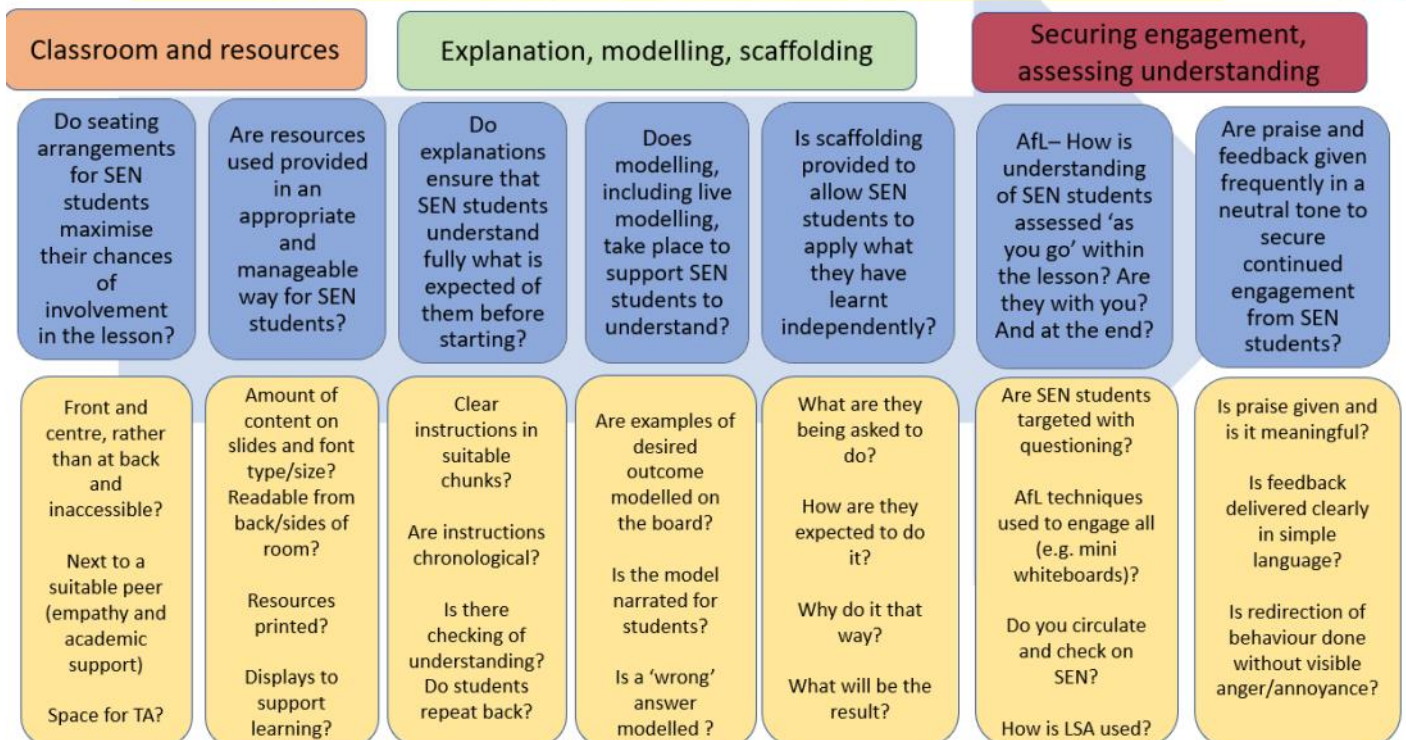
Strengths in the teaching of pupils with SEN seen were as follows:

- evidence of teachers relating concepts to real-life, modern concepts, familiar to pupils, to assist with understanding
- a culture of high expectations
- varied methods of explanation, including dual coding—the board being well used for modelling, explanations which are brief, clear and understanding checked, number blocks used to demonstrate column addition and effective use of the TA
- good use of praise to encourage pupil resilience, including pupils being comfortable with initial *failure* and being encouraged to re-think independently and get the answer right - a result of long-standing expectations set by teachers and a classroom climate where risk-taking with learning is something pupils are comfortable with
- consideration of *preparedness* for learning – the teacher had spare pens, had checked functionality of IT equipment, was at the door to greet pupils
- good answers given by pupils were repeated and re-phrased in language accessible to all
- cultural concepts were explained (a good example was the idea of *fake news*) and no assumptions as to understanding were made.

Middle leader development

These findings were shared collectively with schools via network meetings and during individual visits to both primary and secondary schools during commissioned visits. They fed into this suggested SEN planning process, which was shared with schools.

Suggested seven step SEN lesson planning process



Resource creation and sharing

The MFL Adviser created adapted resources to facilitate increased engagement in speaking and listening and modelled the notion of a *noisy* MFL classroom which facilitated high levels of engagement at a network meeting. Inspired by this, teachers from both primary and secondary schools created and shared their own adapted speaking and writing word mats. The notion of SEN was widened to the consideration of high-attainers also having a specific need and one primary school helped produce a resource to stretch high attaining boys in Year 6.

Adapted speaking mat – Hobbies

Qu'est-ce que tu fais pour t'amuser?
- What do you do for fun?

Reading from the left, using this handy step-by-step guide to build exciting French sentences to impress your teacher and your friends! You don't have to use every box and if you miss one out the sentence still makes sense!

<p>Say when you do it...</p> <p>le lundi - Monday le mardi - Tuesday le mercredi - Wednesday le jeudi - Thursday le vendredi - Friday le samedi - Saturday le dimanche - Sunday</p> <p>souvent - often quelquefois - sometimes le weekend - at the weekend pendant les vacances - in the holidays les soirs - in the evenings</p>	<p>Say what you do...</p> <p>Les sports je joue au football je joue au tennis je joue au basket je joue au cricket</p> <p>Les activités je fais du vélo je fais du skate je fais de la danse je fais de la natation</p> <p>Les instruments je joue du piano je joue de la guitare je joue de la batterie</p>	<p>Say who you do it with...</p> <p>avec ma famille - with my family avec mes amis - with my friends avec mon équipe - with my team dans un groupe - in a group</p>	<p>Say where you do it...</p> <p>au parc - at the park à la maison - at home dans ma chambre - in my bedroom au centre sportif - at the sports centre à l'école - at school dans la rue - in the street</p>	<p>Say why you like it...</p> <p>J'aime ça, parce-que c'est... - I like it because it is... super! amusant - fun social - sociable fantastique</p>
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So here are some examples:
Le weekend, je joue au football avec mes amis au parc.
J'aime ça, parce-que c'est amusant.
Jeudi, je fais de la danse dans un groupe à l'école.
J'aime ça parce que c'est sociable.

Extend your sentences even further by adding these connectives:
[aussi] - also / et - and / [mais] - but / ensuite - then / [d'abord] - first of all
And these times of day:
matin - morning après midi - afternoon [soir] - evening
So... Samedi matin, je joue au football et ensuite je fais du skate aussi!

Adapted speaking mat – Food and drink

Qu'est-ce que tu aimes manger et boire?
- What do you like to eat and drink?

Reading from the left, using this handy step-by-step guide to build exciting French sentences to impress your teacher and your friends! You don't have to use every box and if you miss one out the sentence still makes sense!

<p>Say when you do it...</p> <p>lundi - Monday mardi - Tuesday mercredi - Wednesday jeudi - Thursday vendredi - Friday samedi - Saturday dimanche - Sunday</p> <p>quelquefois - sometimes le weekend - at the weekend les soirs - in the evenings pour mon anniversaire - for my birthday</p>	<p>Say what you eat/drink...</p> <p>Je mange... de la pizza - pizza de la glace - ice cream des churros - churros des crêpes - pancakes des hot-dogs - hot dogs</p> <p>Je bois... du coca-cola - Coke de la limonade - lemonade de l'eau minérale - mineral water de l'Orangina - Orangina</p>	<p>Say who you eat/drink with...</p> <p>seul - on my own avec ma famille - with my family avec mes amis - with my friends</p>	<p>Say where you eat/drink...</p> <p>au parc - at the park à la maison - at home à l'école - at school dans la rue - in the street à la plage - at the beach au restaurant - at the restaurant au café - at the cafe</p>	<p>Say why you like it...</p> <p>J'adore ça, parce-que c'est... - I like it because it is... délicieux - delicious bon pour la santé - good for you</p>
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So here is an example:
Pour mon anniversaire, je mange de la pizza avec mes amis au restaurant. J'adore ça parce-que c'est délicieux!

Extend your sentences even further by adding these connectives:
[aussi] - also / et - and / [mais] - but / ensuite - then / [d'abord] - first of all
And these times of day:
matin - morning après midi - afternoon [soir] - evening
So... Samedi matin, je mange des crêpes et je bois du coca-cola aussi!

NCELP French Phonics interactive poster (courtesy of NCELP)

SFC [silent final consonant] danX	a animal	i midi	eu deux	e je	au [au/əu] gauche
u tu	ou nous	SFE [silent final -e] timidX	é [é/-et/-ez] écrire	en/an enfant	on Non!
ain/in train	ê/è tête	ai vrai	oi voir	ch chercher	ç/soft c ici
qu question	j/soft g jour	-tion Attention!	ien bien	Francophoniques	

Evaluation

Teachers using the resources reported positively on their impact in the classroom, especially in primary schools as their simplicity also supported non-specialist teachers to develop their own confidence. Observations of phonics sessions in secondary schools showed high levels of engagement and teacher feedback regarding suggested approaches was very positive. The learning was shared with ECTs in MFL through the HIAS Advance programme, thus ensuring that new entrants to the profession are committed and increasingly confident in adapting provision for SEN pupils.

This work will continue to be a strong theme of MFL provision next year and colleagues interested to learn more are invited to contact Mark Kingswood, HIAS MFL Adviser mark.kingswood@hants.gov.uk.

Improving provision for SEN pupils in art

Dr Jayne Stillman, County Art Inspector/Adviser, shares the process and outcomes of her cross-phase project in 2022/23.

This project was a collaboration involving a primary school, a secondary school and a special school and focused on considering what art and SEN looks like in the classroom and the strategies that are used in art to support learners with SEND.

The NASEN Teacher Handbook provides a point of reference for the research and was used to inform teachers work.

Teachers asked the following questions:

- what are the considerations required to plan inclusive lessons in art?
- what strategies do we use?
- how do we create an inclusive environment in the art classroom?
- how can we assist learners in art for transition?
- what resources would be useful for the art classroom to support SEN learners?

Teachers created case studies that share practical examples of how they support SEN learners in their art teaching and in their environments.

The primary school case study identified an art SEN focus group of pupils and met weekly for 20 minutes. This group were all on the SEN register and were judged to have additional needs in art. Each week they tried something different and focused on using the basic skills of drawing and painting. There was a lot of discussion, pupil conferencing and support to begin to develop a critical eye. Various tasks were developed to build up pupils' control of materials.

HIAS MOODLE OPEN RESOURCE



Small scale colouring and favourite object to draw



Task:

- Using small 3cm squares to produce a small and contained image.
- First square colouring technique with a felt tip.
- Second square, draw a picture you enjoy drawing and think you can draw well.

Observations:

- Good control when colouring, went over to fill any white gaps.
- Drawings, completed with confidence and no hesitation. Were able to reduce their designs to fit the box.

The research from the primary school element of the project is available on the HIAS art Moodle.

Following the focus on art and SEN, going forward the teacher involved plans:

- to develop cultural capital further around the school
- to display key vocabulary in classes specific to art topic
- ensure support and challenge is evidenced in planning and is implemented in the lesson
- to develop a bank of *physical* (tactile) resources that can accompany a lesson, eg feel and observe the texture of how an artist has applied paint
- to promote more exploration within lessons
- to provide a range of equipment to use
- to have higher expectations for art and pupils with SEN
- to consider the attributes of quality of teaching.

The secondary school case study focuses on the support requirements needed for visually impaired pupils—the school involved has a specialist unit. A particular example is presented of the requirements for specific adaptations to enable a visually impaired Key Stage 4 pupil to access GCSE art. Constant review was required due to the changing physical limitations with the loss of sight and mobility. The teacher examines strategies, media and stimulus to enable pupil access to the curriculum.



(A4) Oil pastels to create textures in nature.

(A4) Half an image provided to act as a visual guide to help with a template for mark making.

(A4) Mark making simplified for differentiation. Student confidence is growing....

(Tiles A5 in size) Mark making explored through clay. Faster to do and experiment with mark making. Self-esteem and variety of creative textures rising



Session one – acrylic paint pouring and marbling



Session two – sponged night sky blending with template silhouettes and added details



The case study identifies many strategies to support visually impaired pupils to access the curriculum. It appreciates that each visually impaired pupil requires specific adaptive approaches and that it is vital to consider the transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 to be ready to support the special educational need as soon as possible. Going forward, the teacher has learnt much about adjusting resources and content of the art curriculum to support visual impairment, but appreciates that this will be ongoing with individual unique strategies in the future.

The special school case study focuses on collaborating with a visiting artist. The case study shares how adaptations took place to the environment, timetable and the use of different resources including an artist to provide a rich experience for learning.

The organisation of the project and detailed planning for each session ensured that each pupil could access and achieve success by collaborating with an outside practitioner. The experience has provided a chance for pupils to appreciate a working artist and to gain knowledge about the vocation and work by an artist. Going forward, opportunities to enrich the curriculum will be examined and the teacher will plan visits and broaden use of a range of media in lessons.

The case studies can be found on the *open resources* area of the Art Moodle <https://art.hias.hants.gov.uk> under art and SEN. For further information, please contact Dr Jayne Stillman jayne.stillman@hants.gov.uk.

Cognitive science-based approaches for pupils with SEN support in science

Kevin Neil, County Inspector/Adviser for Science, shares the work he has done with schools to develop cognitive-based approaches for pupils with SEND support in science.

The growing awareness of the implications of what cognitive science tells us about how the brain works and how learning happens inside the brain, is slowly transforming practice in schools across the country. In 2022, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) published its recommendations for effective practice for pupils with SEND and within this was its “5-a-day” strategy.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS
Summary of recommendations

- 1 Explicit instruction**
Teacher-led approaches with a focus on clear explanations, modelling and frequent checks for understanding. This is then followed by guided practice, before independent practice.
- 2 Cognitive and metacognitive strategies**
Managing cognitive load is crucial if new content is to be transferred into students' long-term memory. Provide opportunities for students to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning.
- 3 Scaffolding**
When students are working on a written task, provide a supportive tool or resource such as a writing frame or a partially completed example. Aim to provide less support of this nature throughout the course of the lesson, week or term.
- 4 Flexible grouping**
Allocate groups temporarily, based on current level of mastery. This could, for example, be a group that comes together to get some additional spelling instruction based on current need, before re-joining the main class.
- 5 Using technology**
Technology can be used by a teacher to model worked examples; it can be used by a student to help them to learn, to practice and to record their learning. For instance, you might use a class visualiser to share students' work or to jointly rework an incorrect model.

Several of these were closely linked to cognitive science-based approaches, in particular number 1, 2 and 3.

During the 2021/2022 academic year, the HIAS Science team ran a project called *Improving science exam outcomes using cognitive science-based approaches*. This successful project gave science departments a range of strategies that could be used to help improve exam outcomes.

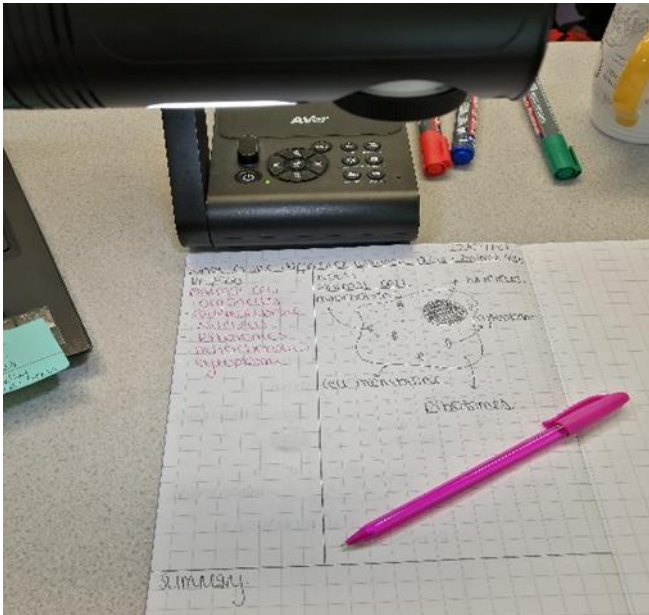
At the conclusion of this project two schools were invited to continue their involvement with a specific focus on how cognitive science-based approaches can help support pupils with SEND.

After several initial meetings, the HIAS Science advisers provided two training sessions for the teachers at the schools. These were in person, and one held at each school. The first session covered a range of approaches that can be used within the teaching of substantive knowledge. These included:

- the process of direct/explicit instruction
- the use of explicit knowledge intent and the sharing and use of this throughout the period of instruction
- retrieval and building on prior knowledge
- dual coding/blank canvas modelling using visualiser.
- *I do, we do, you do* SLOP to develop fluency and mastery
- checking for understanding - mini whiteboards
- use of structured note taking - Cornell Notes

The second session looked at how we can adapt our approaches to practical work in science to make it more accessible to those with additional needs.

After these sessions, the teachers at each school were allowed to choose which strategies they wanted to trial over the following six-month period.



Both schools chose similar strategies with some small differences. Both chose dual coding/blank canvas modelling, the *I do, we do, you do* SLOP, and the use of mini whiteboards.

The teachers then identified classes that contained a high number of pupils with SEND support needs. Prior assessment data was gathered as well as qualitative information regarding attitude to learning, and engagement.

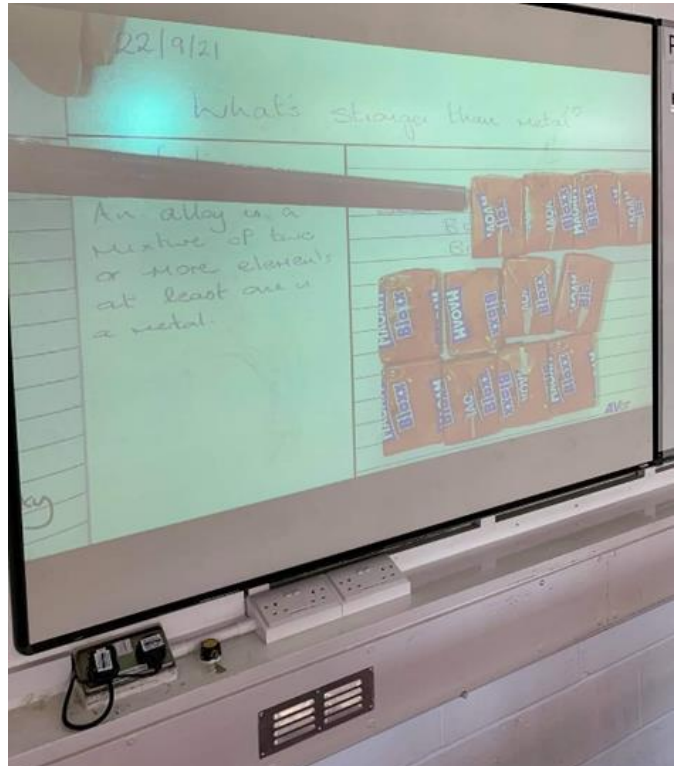
During the six-month period the schools were visited by the HIAS adviser who observed lessons to see teachers using these strategies in classes with targeted pupils. This was followed by a discussion about how they were finding the approaches and some feedback from the pupils. Following these visits, several more meetings occurred to check in with the progress of the project.

At the end of the six-month period, the teachers carried out a review of the project within their own schools. They reviewed the most recent assessments taken by the pupils with SEND, interviewed the pupils and self-evaluated their own practice.

A summary of the quantitative findings shows that 60% of SEN support pupils made more than expected progress in their summative assessments at the end of the project. Although, it must be noted that the difficulty of the assessment papers taken was different at the end due to it being a different topic from the curriculum.

The general findings showed increased engagement for pupils with SEND support in lessons and a reduction in anxiety for some of these pupils. General class behaviour improved as well when using these strategies.

The teachers reported several improvements to their own practice. They described an increase in their own subject knowledge, a reduction in workload/planning time, higher quality questioning and easier to adapt teaching in the moment, when needed.



At the end of the project, the pupils involved were interviewed and asked for their thoughts on the strategies that had been used.

"I remember more stuff off my head."

"I don't really like doing all the practice, but I can see how it really helps me and I feel written exams are easier because of it."

"I like it because I know what's going to happen in lessons."

"I think the visualiser is a great way of helping me to know what to write into my book and it's clear for us about what are the most important things in each lesson to know and remember. The lessons are great, and I feel like I can now learn well in science because of these methods."

Overall, the project was successful. The quantitative data shows that there is an improvement to assessment scores, which is great. However, the real success of the project was from the pupils' observations and feedback. The improvements in memory, the reduced anxiety, the clarity about what they need to know and remember, and the improved modelling and explanations from using the visualiser all show real time, in class benefits that over a longer time frame will have a significant impact on progress for pupils with SEND and their engagement with science.

Following on from this project, both schools have now heavily invested in these approaches and more. They have purchased high quality visualisers for all teachers, removed poor quality PowerPoint slides, introduced powerful knowledge statements, use of CFL, rehearsal, and CFU, and thinking hard about the cognitive load placed on pupils through teacher instruction and task.

If you would like more information about this project or would like some CPD on these cog-sci based strategies that not only benefit pupils with SEND, but all pupils as well, then you can contact Kevin Neil, HIAS Science adviser at kevin.neil@hants.gov.uk.

'Cathedral building' approaches to SEND in history

Sarah Herrity, County Inspector/Adviser for History, shares the work she has done with schools on the HIAS History SENK support project.



"Why should some pupils build a cathedral while others assemble a garden shed?"

Dr Michael Riley speaking at the HIAS History Secondary Leadership Conference

This quote wonderfully encapsulates the key message for an inclusive approach to history teaching. The danger is that history teachers will be tempted to pare down knowledge content and simplify vocabulary thinking this will support pupils with SEN in understanding the history curriculum. The 2021 Ofsted research review explains why this is not a successful approach to supporting learning in history.

"In some subjects, it may be effective to reduce the demands on pupils' working memory by removing material that is not considered core content. However, such an approach in history is likely to be counterproductive. Paradoxically, pupils often need to encounter lots of contextual or background material (sometimes referred to as 'hinterland') in order to make sense of, and learn, core knowledge."

Pupils need rich stories through which to learn about key concepts and provide meaningful contexts within the larger emerging historical narratives.

The review argues that, *“teachers can increase these opportunities for incidental learning through selecting appropriately challenging vocabulary and texts. This will support pupils to develop new knowledge, supported by what they already know”* as knowledge is generative.

While this is the case, it requires carefully planned teaching that draws on prior learning and pre-teaches important new concepts in order to provide access to new learning. Adaptive teaching based on the continual assessment of children’s learning during lessons is also crucial to securing learning.

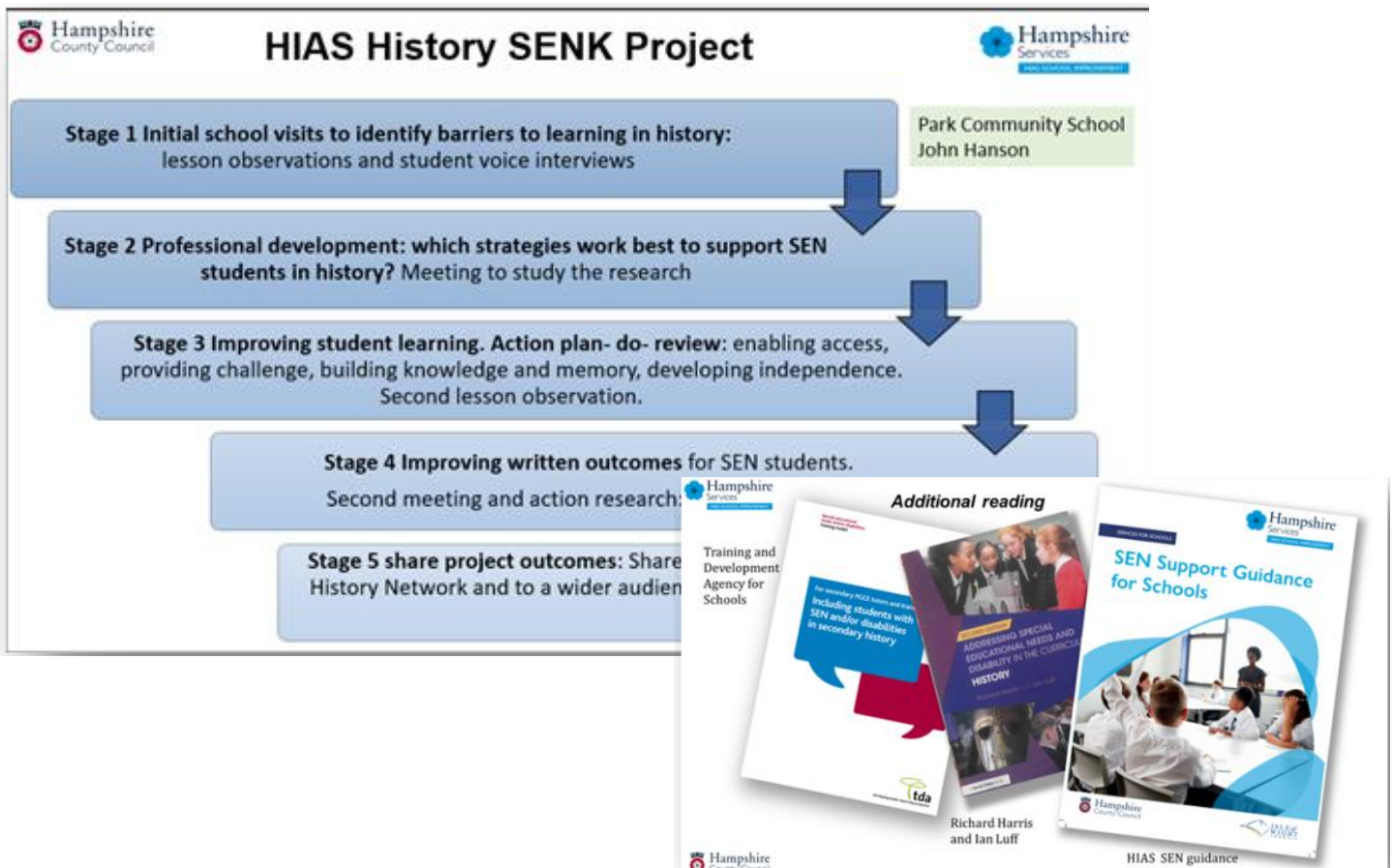
The HIAS history SEN support project provided the opportunity to support teachers in two schools in developing inclusive and adaptive practices to support history pupils with SEND. I was privileged to work with two committed history teachers early in their careers, Jack Spencer, History teacher at John Hanson School and

Barney Pycroft, History Leader at Park Community School.

The HIAS history SEND project had the following 5 stages.

Stage 1: Initial observations and pupil interviews revealed several existing strategies supporting pupils with SEND during lesson observations:

1. There was a can-do supportive environment.
2. Language was tailored to all pupils to increase access and add challenge.
3. Visuals/pictures used well to revisit prior learning and grow sense of period.
4. Knowledge recall activities at the start of lessons allowed you to build on prior learning the previous lesson.
5. Key terms were taught explicitly.
6. Guided reading increased access to learning.
7. Collaborative metacognition and writing scaffolds supported pupil independence.
8. Writing is modelled at key moments.



The key barriers to learning identified during initial visits:

1. Pupils with SEND could not tell the big story to explain the importance of new learning.
2. Pupils talked in slang rather than using technical language and gave general rather than specific knowledge.
3. Pupils collaborated with teacher but struggled to write explanation independently.
4. Pupils did not understand how a historian worked with sources so were unsure how to write about sources within the enquiry.
5. Pupils struggled to remember learning from previous topics and felt they didn't know what was important to remember.
6. Pupils felt they often did not understand what they were reading from a text book independently and took a long time to read it or write answers from it.
7. Some pupils with SEND struggled to process teacher explanation and verbal summaries fast enough.

Stage 2: The professional development session with the history teachers focused on research available to teachers on successful strategies for supporting pupils with SEND. For example, the Nasen SEND Teacher Handbook provided a range of strategies to make whole class teaching inclusive, including ensuring teaching activities enable opportunity for deep processing of information, as well as elaborate rehearsal supporting understanding and memory building.

Hampshire Services
How to approach whole class teaching for SEND learners.
 Teacher Handbook: SEND
 What will you focus on improving in your practice?
 Hampshire County Council

When you plan your whole-class teaching, always use approaches that are effective for learners with SEND. This will provide all learners with opportunities to learn in **small steps**, carefully building upon their prior knowledge. Be **explicit with the language** you use, providing clear guidance about what learners are expected to do.

Check that the words you use are understood. Demonstrate what you want learners to do, to show them what you mean. Consider using **physical resources to help abstract concepts become more accessible** and meaningful. Use **real-life examples** to which learners can relate. Make sure that you **sequence learning**, so that each **new idea makes logical sense**, based on what learners already know. Be careful to **avoid overloading** learners' working memories, by making sure that they have the prerequisite knowledge and skills, ready to apply to new learning. Give **lots of opportunities to practise new learning**, so that knowledge and skills are more likely to be stored in learners' long-term memories. Provide **regular opportunities for learners to practise recalling** what they have learnt, to help them easily access this information when it is needed. All of these will contribute to a good structure and support framework to your teaching, which will enable all learners to make good progress.

Nasen Whole school SEN guidance

The excellent HIAS guidance provided a range of strategies for supporting cognition and learning and improving better pupil interaction and communication to facilitate learning.

The book on addressing SEN and disability in history by Richard Harris and Ian Luff is one of the few subject specific publications for history in this area and is highly recommended for history teachers looking to support pupils with SEND in history. This together with the former Training and Development Agency guidance for PGCE pupils gave practical examples of using multi-sensory approaches to make abstract concepts more concrete and support children in building memory of larger narratives for example.

Some of the key strategies explored can be seen on the self-evaluation form on the following page. This allowed the teachers to reflect on strategies that would support the needs of their particular pupils with SEND and identify priority areas of practice to implement in their action research.

Stage 3: A Plan-do-review approach was recommended to facilitate evaluation of impact and adaption of approaches to better meet need. Read on to hear about the impact of the project in the words of the two history teachers who took part.

Improving access and attainment for history SEN students Hampshire Services

1. Know your students and their needs.
2. Identify the barriers to learning/gaps in knowledge and skills
3. Identify the strategies that will work well for students for this area of need
4. Plan – do – review

What actions do you need to take first? Create a plan for the strategies you will trial and evaluate with your identified SEN students.

Need/Priority	Action	Success Criteria	Evidence in student's work	Evaluation of impact

Hampshire County Council

If you would like more information, please contact Sarah Herrity, HIAS History Adviser sarah.herrity@hants.gov.uk

Self-evaluation form by Sarah Herrity - HIAS History Adviser

Jack Spencer, History Teacher at John Hanson School.

Self-evaluation of strategies used to help SEN students learn	Always	Sometimes	Never
1. Know your student's individual needs and what their learning gaps/barriers are in your lessons. Plan, do and review – trial strategies to help them overcome them.			
2. Create a 'can do' environment. Give students early chances for success and encourage them to take pride in their work.			
3. Make learning engaging from the start, memorable and relevant.			
4. Build explicitly on what they already know.			
5. Pre-empt the gap in vocabulary and cultural capital. Pre-teach key concepts/vocab.			
6. Use stories, role play simulation and visuals to support understanding.			
7. Teach students the big story and return to it, linking in current learning. Make it visual. Look after the chronologically and geographically lost.			
8. Use regular micro-assessment within lesson to adapt your teaching where necessary. Use questions that clarify e.g. What's the difference between; spot misconceptions e.g. circle the right answer hinge questions on white boards			
9. Support working memory of fingertip knowledge with post its, timelines, powerful visuals, summaries of key learning, key word definitions. Build longer term memory of key people, places and events with retrieval practise, learning homework using knowledge organisers and interleaving.			
10. Enable access to reading material/sources. Don't dumb things down. Look ahead at what they will be reading: what substantive knowledge will be missing: concepts, terms, stories, references, sense of period/ contextual - how things worked; what disciplinary knowledge will be needed, what criteria / process/language/available sources a historian would use for this enquiry?			
11. Use strategies like guided reading, pre -teaching new key vocabulary and frequent checks for understanding. Emphasise key information in the text and explore its relevance to the enquiry. Include space on resources to annotate with knowledge/pictures/definitions.			
12. Use the board/visualiser to refine and model annotations. Make sure the building blocks needed for their readiness to write are built in such as key knowledge and short key explanatory/analytical phrases for example annotating the nature, extent and cause of changes on a living graph.			
13. Use quiet periods of the lesson to interact with pupils—don't invigilate. Create space in lessons to intervene individually or in a small group when needed.			
14. Break learning/writing into step-by-step approach and model each part of the process and outcome. Use writing scaffolds where appropriate.			
15. use metacognition to think out loud to reveal what you are doing and why. Share the deliberation and challenges and decisions you are thinking though when constructing writing. Live modelling your explanation/analysis in writing helps it feel attainable for children.			
16. Use deliberate practice including scaffolded purposeful talk as to encourage verbalisation of ideas and arguments. Practice at word, sentence and paragraph level. Listen and give developmental feedback around talk and scaffolded/collaborative writing before individual writing. Use I do, we do in pairs, I do.			
17. Don't remove the students from history, these students need the specialist expert help more. Work with your SEN department/TA to help them pre-teach concepts/vocab and support effectively in the classroom.			

Which children with SEND were you targeting in the project?

- GCSE pupil 1 who has difficulties processing information and weaker short term memory.
- GCSE pupil 2 who also has difficulties processing information.

What are the barriers to making progress?

- Both pupil 1 and 2 struggle to see the *big picture* and place their knowledge within it.
- Both pupils tend to express themselves in writing using slang terms - *sort of; this was a big deal.*
- Both struggle to remember key information from earlier in topics.

What strategies did you trial to overcome these barriers?

1. Essential information and key words from each topic were summarised with a picture to dual-code, helping cognitive load and revision in home learning.
2. Key knowledge was revisited at the start of lessons to check and build on prior learning. Answers to recall questions appear in written form so pupils can fill in missing answers.

3. Micro planning was used with the pupils to help them use and explain the knowledge to answer GCSE questions

4. Knowledge summaries are now completed on each exam topic with the pupils, to ensure that

How did the Lakota Sioux see the Great Plains?	
What were their beliefs?	Why may this cause conflict with others?

key knowledge is secure.

You can see key words are being used in this

MAKING OF AMERICA UNIT 1 KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

American expansion West before 1830:

- 1.1 **SEVERE** land by Great Britain and Native tribes following years in the 1700s-1790s.
- Westward Territory**—farmers were encouraged to move here by selling 640-acre plots for \$640. However, many could not afford this, and rich land speculators bought the land instead.
- Westward Territory**—land given to slave owners to set up cotton and tobacco plantations with slave labor.
- 1.2 **DISCOVERY** 240 million acres from the French Empire, for only \$5 million, in 1803. The land is called Louisiana and stretches over the Mississippi River, across the Great Plains all the way to the Rocky Mountains. It doubles the size of the USA.
- 1.3 **EXPLORE** One by one, from North America, beyond the Rocky Mountains much of the area now part of Mexico, apart from a space in the far North West. This was claimed by both Great Britain and the USA. The USA went the explorers Lewis and Clark to map the area in 1804, and try to find an easy route to the Pacific Ocean. Although they don't find an easy route, they do show ways through the Rocky Mountains.

Factors which helped slavery grow before 1800:

- 1.1 **Cotton gin (1793)**, a machine which separated the seeds from the cotton quickly. This sped up how much cotton could be produced and sold, so required more cotton to be grown, and more slaves to harvest it. It also encouraged the 'cotton kingdom', which set huge targets and almost punishments if they were not met.
- 2.1 **Louisiana Purchase (1803)**. This gave new land for slave owners to move into, and New Orleans becomes an important port to sell their cotton around the world.
- 3.1 **Missouri Compromise (1820)**. An agreement between politicians to solve arguments about slavery. It is agreed that only new states south of Missouri will allow slavery, which new states north of Missouri will ban slavery.

Problems caused by slavery:

- 1.1 The USA is becoming more divided over the issue, with many in the South believing slavery should be totally abolished (Abolitionists).
- 2.1 Slave owners are becoming increasingly worried about what may happen if they let their slaves go free—revenge attacks and rebellions were happening in the Caribbean during the early 1800s.
- 3.1 Much of the cotton cloth industry around the world depended on buying slave grown cotton. If the slaves were not happy, this cotton would become more expensive and could cause problems around the world. The South was also totally reliant on producing cotton to its main income.

What was the Indian Removal Act (1830)?

A law passed by the US Government which forced the Native tribes living in the Southern United States to move thousands of miles west. President Jackson wanted them off the land so he could encourage more slave plantations in the southern states.

The People's Health Unit 3: Industrial Revolution

The areas interested in improving public health:

- 1848 **Public Health Act** - government passed a public health act that made poor people have to pay for water.
- 1852 **Public Health Act** - asked on cleanliness requirements.
- 1875 **Public Health Act** - asked on cleanliness requirements.

Public Health Act 1848:

- 1848 **Public Health Act** - government passed a public health act that made poor people have to pay for water.
- 1852 **Public Health Act** - asked on cleanliness requirements.
- 1875 **Public Health Act** - asked on cleanliness requirements.

What other diseases were common at the time?

- 1848 **Public Health Act** - government passed a public health act that made poor people have to pay for water.
- 1852 **Public Health Act** - asked on cleanliness requirements.
- 1875 **Public Health Act** - asked on cleanliness requirements.

summary on People's Health.

However, you can also see from this example there are still knowledge gaps, so the teacher knowledge organiser was used to support filling the gaps in the pupil knowledge.

What happened to the Native Americans in the eastern United States?

Starter Questions:

1. What is slavery?
2. Name a slave state.
3. Name three factors which enabled slavery to grow.
4. Name two problems slavery caused as America grew.

Starter Questions:

1. The ownership of another person.
2. Alabama / Georgia / Mississippi / North or South Carolina / Virginia
3. Cotton Gin / Louisiana Purchase / Missouri Compromise
4. Growing reliance / Growing opposition / Growing fears

Additional content includes a table with text and images describing Anglo-Saxon society, women's rights, the Wergild, Christianity, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Golden Age, and stone buildings.

Knowledge organisers gave the pupils the core knowledge focused through the lens of the GCSE specification big questions.

These are now used to support pupils during learning homework and GCSE answer planning. This has led to improvements in knowledge.

However, they still needed guidance in writing answers using this knowledge. More guided writing with clear criteria, key words, and sentence prompts has improved the quality of pupils writing at GCSE. We started with asking the pupils to decide whether the impact was positive or negative or stays the same. They then practised some sentences.

What impact did the Industrial Revolution have on public health?

Positive?
Negative!
Stays the same?

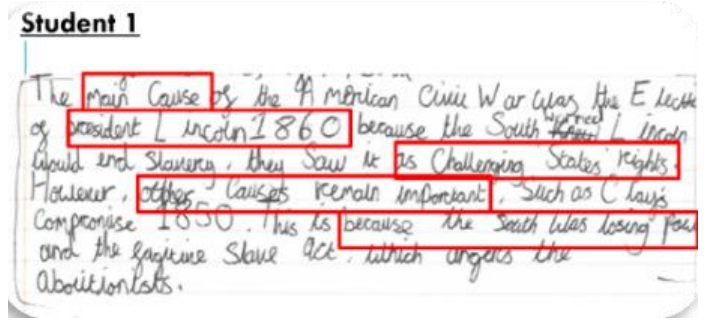
The Industrial Revolution had a terrible impact on Public Health. This is because....

Keywords:
Back-to-Back housing
Urbanisation
Factories
Pollution
Coal-smoke
Adulterated foods

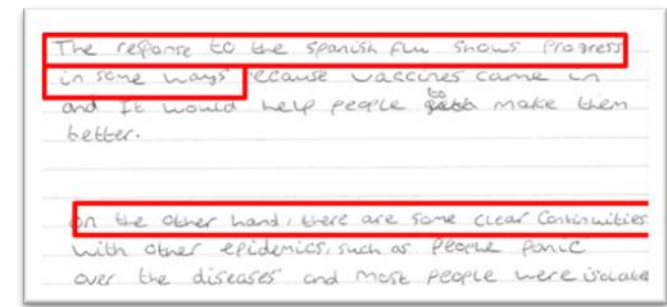
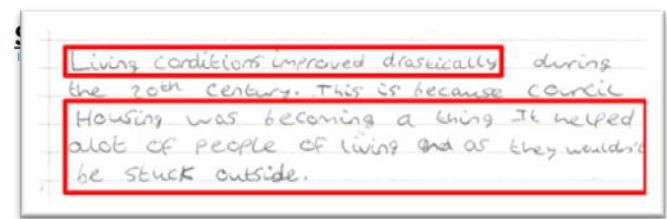
Adulterated – mixed with other things

Pupils could practise saying the word adulterated and explaining what it means before using it, which increased their confidence! This improved their arguments and use of key terms, however their answer showed that their explanation still needed improvement. A model was therefore added to show them what developed explanation looked like before they improved their answers.

The Industrial Revolution had a terrible impact on Public Health. This is because **the huge increase in factories encouraged rapid urbanisation**, with towns becoming even more overcrowded. **Houses were usually built back-to-back in order to fit as many people in as possible.** These factories caused **pollution, particularly coal-smoke, which led to lots of lung problems.** In addition, as it was hard to get fresh food into the huge new cities, **most food available to the poor was adulterated with other goods.** This meant that many in the cities **lacked essential nutrients.**



This example showed the pupils needed more help constructing explanation. For example, it shows they have understood the main cause and how Lincoln's intentions to send slavery was seen as a Challenge to State's rights. However, explanation of the other causes is limited or confused as Clay's Compromise gave the South more power.



This answer is similar with improved outcomes showing knowledge of clear changes and continuities in public health.

However, explanation is lacking so the approach on the next slide was created to tackle this.


This Lego building approach attempted to improve their explanation, by modelling and supporting their deliberate practice.

Pupils:

- chose an argument
- chose a connective to introduce their chosen piece of evidence
- chose a connecting phrase to introduce their chosen matching explanation.

This is modelled by the teacher to show how their chosen building blocks create a strong explanatory paragraph:

Argument in yellow **Evidence in green** **Explanation in blue**

	There had been some improvements for most...	Most lives had experienced little improvement...	Life for some had improved somewhat...	
	This is because...	This is due to the fact that...	For example	For instance...
	Many African Americans in the South remained working on the plantations.	The Conscription Act Riots demonstrated that racism was widespread across America.	The Second Confiscation Act in 1872 was short-lived. The land could be bought back by the old slave owners after the war.	
	Some of the freed slaves were able to set up their own farms, or train in different jobs such as barber or fireman.	The Emancipation Proclamation led to the freedom of the 4 million people held as slaves in the South.	African Americans in the North continued to face racism.	
	This meant that...	As a result of this...	This suggests that...	This would mean that...
	The improvements were varied, and depended on where you were in America.	Whilst there had been some crucial improvements, lives remained the same for most.	Although life continued to be difficult, by the end of the war some were able to improve their lives.	

Then as a class they write the next paragraph with the teacher on the visualiser before they then write their own and colour code their answer.

Life for some had improved somewhat. This is because the Emancipation Proclamation led to the freedom of the 4 million people held as slaves in the South. Some of the freed slaves were able to set up their own farms, or train in different jobs such as barber or fireman. However, most continued to work on the cotton plantations. Similarly, African Americans in the North continued to face racism. This suggests that whilst there had been some crucial improvements, lives remained the same for most.

Why did America go to war with itself?

Unit 3 of Making of America:

CAUSES	Civil War – 1861-1865	Reconstruction		
1840s	1850s	1860s	1870s	1880s
				

- What caused the Civil War?
- How far did the Civil War improve the lives of African Americans?
- Was Reconstruction successful?

In summary, how have these strategies impacted the outcomes for pupils with SEND?

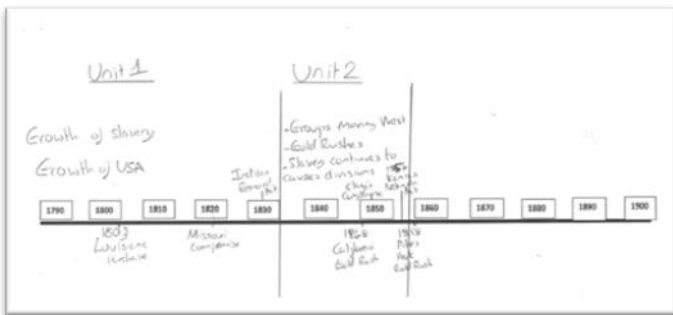
1. Knowledge organisers have gone some way to improve demonstration of knowledge in written tasks.
2. Guided writing has resulted in better quality instances of the two pupils *writing like a historian*.

The biggest impact has been on pupil 1. Their independent writing has improved, with many talking like a historian phrases appearing and a more confident use of knowledge as evidence (see examples in the presentation attached). Pupil 2 has had a lot of school absence so their progress has been limited.

There is more to do in terms of:

- scaffolding their talk and giving pupils the language to explain their knowledge in a relevant way in writing
- helping pupils to locate the knowledge chronologically.

We are trialling completing a timeline as we go through the course, revisiting the timeline each sequence of lessons and adding analysis.



What impact has the project on your practice?

It has been great to be part of the SEN project in history and reflect together on ways to improve support for pupils with SEN in history lessons. I particularly love the strategies which have helped pupils improve their written explanation, like the word walls which give the pupils the phrases which they can then use to construct paragraphs together. They have proven very versatile—they can be printed to support pupils with SEN during extended writing, and be colour-coded or drawn over to support further; they can also be given with sentences missing to higher attainers to add in the evidence or explanation.

The government's response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic was...			Shocking	Varied	Impressive
			Complicated	Helpful	Harmful
			Well-intentioned		Ineffective.
This was because...		This is due to the fact that...			
This suggests that...		This means that...		As a result...	
The government did not intervene enough in this crisis.		The government was too cautious in dealing with this epidemic.		The government's response to this crisis has improved over time.	

It has also stressed to me how useful knowledge organisers are, not just for those with SEN, but the whole class; the creation of these and experimenting in the best way to use them to look after cognitive load and reinforce knowledge has been a big focus for me this year.

What will be your next steps to improve the learning of your pupils with SEND?

I will continue to use word walls and knowledge organisers and find the best way to imbed them into my practice. I will also be mindful of looking after *chronologically* lost with lessons schemes married with timelines constructed as the lessons progress.

Barney Pycroft, History Leader at Park Community School

Which children were you targeting in the project?

A Year 9 class of children who had a range of SEND needs.

What has been the impact of the project on your practice?

The history SEN project allowed me to think deeply about the needs of learners with SEND and reflect on the appropriateness of our curriculum and how we adapt our teaching to their needs. I have come away from the project more confident in supporting pupils with SEND and more confident at supporting colleagues to support pupils with SEND.

What impact have the strategies had on the learning experience and outcomes for the identified pupils with SEND?

My particular focus was on building independence in learners by supporting pupils with appropriate resources over a series of lessons and slowly removing scaffolding. For example, in September we did a lot of work as a class, including whole class reading and working together under the visualiser. Over the course of the year, I have slowly been removing these whole-group aspects of lessons to allow pupils to have more time to work independently, without feeling lost or overwhelmed.

I have also carefully tweaked and adapted schemes of work to give pupils the contextual knowledge they need to build a bank of knowledge to support them to work independently, rather than relying on me for knowledge input. For example, at the beginning of our topic on the Holocaust, I made a *big picture* style grid with the key dates and moments of escalation within the Holocaust, so that pupils could organise their thoughts before digging deeper into each moment in the topic.

New knowledge	Why did Gerda's family know 'the time had come to leave'?	What freedoms were the Nazis taking away? (political, economic, social)
7 April 1933 - new law to remove any Jewish people or 'non-Aryans' from government jobs.		
April 1933 - an official one day boycott of Jewish shops and doctors took place all over Germany.		
May 1933 - Jewish people are banned from public places like parks, swimming baths, hotels and sports teams.		
1934 - there was an increase in anti-Jewish propaganda (information to turn the population against Jewish people).		
May 1935 - A law was passed forbidding Jews to join the army.		
September 1935 - The 'Nuremberg Laws' were passed. These banned marriages between Jews and Aryans. Sexual relationships were also banned between Jews and Aryans. Jewish people also lost the right to be German citizens.		
April 1938 - Jews had to register their property in. This made it easier to confiscate.		
Between June and July 1938 Jewish doctors, dentists and lawyers were forbidden to treat Aryans.		
October 1938 - Jews had to have a red letter 'J' stamped on their passports.		

I also added a keyword match up exercise to support pupils through the topic.

Keyword	Definition
The Holocaust	The event in November 1938 - (night of the broken glass) when 7500 businesses destroyed, 91 Jews murdered, 30,000 arrested, 1400 synagogues burnt.
Persecution	The murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazis between 1933-1945
Kristallnacht	A place of worship for Jewish people
Anti-Semitism	The unfair treatment of a group of people, often based on race or religion
Synagogue	Racism, specifically against Jewish people

By the end of the year, pupils are much more confident at working independently, and their working grades have improved, as indicated by key assessment data in the table. Green is where the pupils have improved. In some cases, pupils doubled their test scores. There are three different codes that are used in Pupil Assessment Tracker reporting, these are as follows:

N – No special educational need.

E – Education, health and care plan.

K – SEN support.

What will be your next steps to improve the learning of your pupils with SEND?

My next steps link to metacognition and getting stuck. Now that pupils feel confident and can work independently, I will be pushing them to start actively trying to *get stuck* and explicitly teaching strategies to overcome this. This will build independence further but also resilience and will allow pupils to take the next steps to be successful.

Pupil	SEN Status	WAG History 9Su23 .Year 9 Summer Term	History WAG 9Sp23 .Year 9 Spring Term	WAG History 9A22 .Year 9 Autumn Term
Pupil 1	K	WTB	WTB	WTB
Pupil 2	E	WTA	WTB	WTB
Pupil 3	K	WTA	WTB	WTA
Pupil 4	K	WTA	WTB	WTA
Pupil 5	K	WTA	WTA	WTA
Pupil 6	E	WTB	WTB	WTA
Pupil 7	K	WTA	WTB	WTA
Pupil 8	K	WTB	WTB	WTB
Pupil 9	E	WTA	WTB	WTB
Pupil 10	K	WTA	WTA	WTA
Pupil 11	K	ARE	ARE	WTA
Pupil 12	K	WTA	WTA	WTA
Pupil 13	K	WTB	WTB	WTB
Pupil 14	K	WTA	WTA	WTA
Pupil 15	E	WTA	WTA	WTA

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Working memory – how important is it for learners with SEND?



Before unpicking the intricacies of the working memory, we need to understand what it is. Working memory is one of the brain's executive functions that allows us to work with information and details without losing track of it. It also allows us to organise information, so that it can be used for long term storage. There is some discussion around whether the working memory is also the same as the short-term memory (STM).

It is generally accepted that the main difference is between the two are that working memory incorporates the manipulation of the information for use elsewhere or within a different task. Working memory involves the comprehension and processing of information whereas STM has information that is taken in and lost within 30 seconds.

In the Disney and Pixar animated movie, *Inside Out*, STM are the memories which are thrown into the *dump* because they are no longer required by Riley, the main character. This is because we each have our own individual capacity for holding information. The amount of information and the length of time we can hold this information for can be impacted by several factors. This can include whether we have a learning difficulty or disability such as ADHD, ASD or SpLD. This capacity can also be impacted by external influences such as how tired or hungry we are. If we do not need the information, it is discarded to keep the space for holding information free of clutter.

So why is working memory so important to our learners with SEND and why might they find it more difficult to use theirs than their neurotypical peers? *Everyone struggles with the limits of working memory sometimes - forgetting an item from a shopping list or drawing a blank when you're trying to remember the rules of a new game.* This can be due to us being hungry, tired or distracted by another piece of information.

For our learners with SEND who have diagnoses such as ADHD or ASD, and/or who have deficits with their executive function, low working memory is often one of the initial barriers to the process of completing tasks.

Working memory can be involved in tasks such as:

- holding on to multiple pieces of information before deciding on one specific one – multiple choice questions, several questions being asked at once and knowing which order to give your responses
- the ability to follow verbal instructions – where do I write my date and my learning objective? How much space do I need to leave to stick my sheet in? Which colour pen should I be using to complete my feedback?
- organising the instructions so that they make sense or so that they can be completed properly and then being able to repeat them back to a peer.

“I have often been told across various schools that the students often just “don’t listen”...”

If we stop and think about how this can impact on learners in terms of their daily educational access, low working memory ability can be misinterpreted as a behaviour issue. As a SENDCo at a SEMH provision, I have often been told across various schools that the students often just “*don’t listen*” or the information seems to go “*in one ear and out of the other*”. Other students may appear to have just zoned out or be focused on everything except the teacher.

When I sit with the teacher, and we go through the signifiers linked with their diagnosis, it can often become difficult to unpick what each element of their behaviour is trying to tell us. Is the student who has a diagnosis of ADHD, struggling to focus due to their inattention, their difficulty at dealing with challenging tasks or is it due to the fact that they have not been able to hold all of the information in their brains? Or have they just become so overwhelmed by all of the information being presented to them that they mentally shut down? One of the first things I work with teachers and TAs on together is to develop a strategy to support the students’ working memory. I will complete an observation of the student in a series of lessons. I want to see what the demand is like across subjects on their working memory and at which point in the task they begin to display that they are struggling. Are they able to begin the task and then lose focus or do they struggle to even begin it? I want to see if their apparent refusal to engage is them trying to process too much information. I look at how they manage this load in other subjects and what other teachers have put in place to support them and how it can be transferred to other subjects.

When it comes to assessing working memory, it can be useful to assess the student’s language and reading skills to ensure that there are no underlying linguistic concerns. Assessments, such as BPVS, can assess students’ understanding of single word receptive language and LASS 8-11 or LASS 11-15 can assess students’ visual and auditory memory. These can be easily implemented with students to give a better understanding of any gaps they might have in these areas. It is worth noting that there are several other products which are available.

Signs that students might have issues with their working memory:

“Students who struggle with working memory may appear to be forgetful, distracted, constantly seeking support or just outright disruptive.”

Students who struggle with working memory may appear to be forgetful, distracted, constantly seeking support or just outright disruptive. They may appear to be disengaged from the work and the instructions given by the adults in the room, or they may stop working altogether because they cannot remember what to do next but are too nervous to ask for help.

They may struggle to transfer skills from one task or situation across to another one. These difficulties can also roll over in their social time, with them finding it difficult to follow the complexities of group conversations. They may struggle to recall the level of detail needed to keep their peers involved in topics of conversation that interest them. When all of these components are put together, it may have a detrimental impact on their self-esteem.

These difficulties can often result in poor academic success in subjects such as English, maths and science. This could be due to the difficulties they face in the sequential components of these subjects.

Examples of how issues with working memory can look:

Following practical instructions:

A student is given instructions for a practical task in order to complete an experiment, eg go and set up your Bunsen burner, collect the three chemicals, pick a piece of litmus paper. Next, set up your tripod with the beaker on top of it and do not forget to put your goggles on. The student might put their goggles on and set up their Bunsen burner but may not collect the chemicals.

Mental maths:

A student is told to multiply 7 by 8 and take away 6. They might remember the numbers but not the order or the process that needs to be applied to them.

Answering questions:

A student is given a question and then offered 3 or 4 possible answers. They are unable to remember what the question was in the first place and need it be repeated. Once it is repeated, they cannot remember the options available to answer the question.

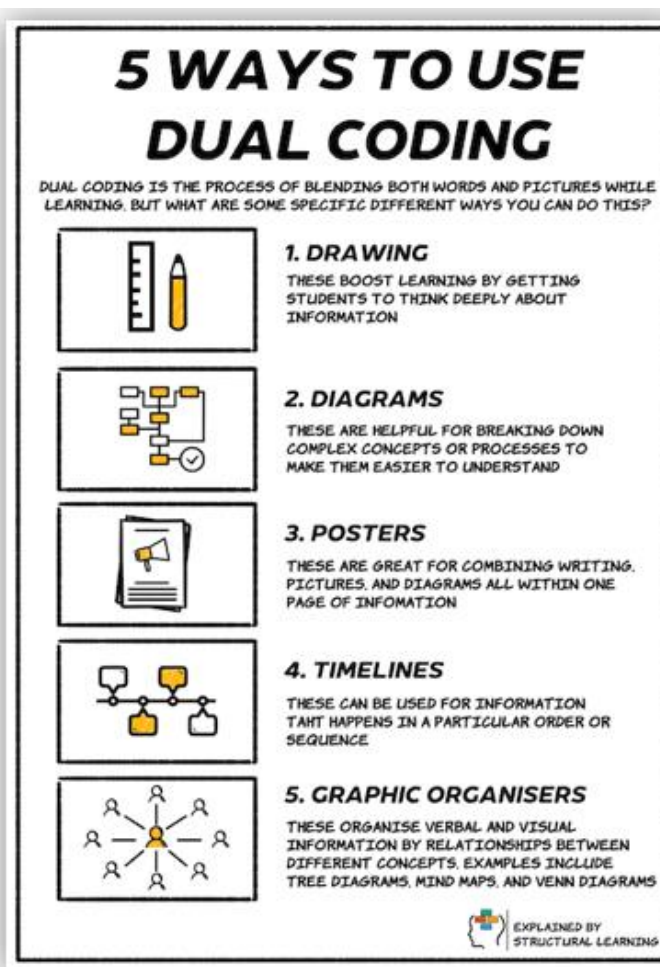
Support strategies for weak working memory:

Now, Next and Then boards. At The Coppice Spring Academy, we have been working closely with Lucy Taylor from the Hampshire Speech and Language Therapy team and this has been a big focus over the summer term for our teachers to support our learners. Our learners have individual white boards which have their specific tasks on. This lowers the amount of demand on their cognitive abilities and reduces the pressure they can feel to complete tasks successfully. This allows for them to focus on the learning as opposed to holding the next steps or next piece of information. These can be individualised for each student depending on where they are in their own learning journey or if they are working on different tasks or courses. It can also help to support learner's independence skills as they have a point of reference to go to before asking teachers or TAs for help.

These steps/instructions can also be printed on stickers and stuck in students' books ahead of lessons. Moving forward next year, our next focus will be use these alongside a dual coding system to support students further.

Simplify your instructions: Make sure the language you use is as simple as possible. Your sentences need to be simple, concise and clear. Keep your directions in a logical sequence. Put examples of success for each step at the end of each instruction – see next strategy.

Dual code: Use a variety of methods to display information. Using key words, diagrams, images and sounds to support understanding concepts.



Print the task instructions out and have them in front of the learners: This limits the amount of Cognitive Load being placed on them when they are already trying to manipulate the information to complete the task. They do not need to hold the task in their memory as well.

Memory aides:

“Using memory games to promote and support the student’s memory.”

These can be knowledge/graphic organisers, mind maps, verbal notes on technological aids, diaries and chunking tasks together. Pre-teaching new vocabulary to ensure that they are not introduced for the first time in class with increased sensory input and pressure to achieve in front of their peers. This can also include using memory games to promote and support the student’s memory. This could be Simon Says with more than one instruction or *I went to the shop and I bought...*

Routines: If students know what to expect, it can help them to manage the demand on their cognitive load. This can include regular, planned learning breaks, chunking the information and tasks, making the goals smaller and slowing down the pace of the delivery of the information.

Use acronyms and/or Mnemonics to learn key concepts for a topic: Richard of York Gave Battle In Vain for the colours of the rainbow or ‘i before e except after c’.

Repetition: Repetition can be applied to several aspects of the lesson, from daily procedures, to instructions, to tasks, to memory aides such as multiplication charts/knowledge organisers. This helps students to become familiar and comfortable in the systems and expectations of the classroom. This can reduce the level of stress of the student and therefore allow information to pass through the students’ long-term memory (LTM). If instructions need to be repeated, try repeating them using the same instructions before you change the instructions. This can support the student to process the information before you amend the instructions and confuse the student further. Repetition can also include repeating tasks to support the student’s ability to learn new processes. For example, starting each lesson with the same task but with different figures. These can include a task that recaps the learning from the previous

day, a task that recaps the learning from the previous week and then a task that recaps the learning from two or three weeks before.

Using different pedagogical approaches: When introducing new skills or to support students in completing tasks, utilise a variety of pedagogical approaches. For example, watching an example of success and having the written instructions to follow while trying to physically complete the task at the same time is going to guarantee more success than just telling the students what to do. This can also include active reading, using highlighters to annotate/draw what they can visualise as they’re reading/writing questions down next to the words on the sheet as you read to them. They could draw a summary of what they have read at the end of each paragraph to support them understanding the whole text. These diagrams can be transferred to a mind map or a story board to show the whole picture.

Use handouts instead of asking the students to copy out tasks:

“Handouts allow them space to process and complete the tasks that actually support their learning.”

If copying has no other process beyond time filling, why not give the students a handout of the information, allowing them space to process and complete the tasks that actually support their learning. Print outs of PowerPoints can be used for learners to track their progress and focus on the tasks that need completing or making useful notes instead of trying to remember the words being said as well as writing down the notes from the board.

Processing time: This is probably one of the hardest but most effective strategies for teachers to use – silence. When you have given the students the information they need, in whichever format they need it to be in, allow them the time to process it. Give them the space to process the information you have given them. Then they need to decide how they will use it according to the task requirements. If you watch how they are

attempting the task, you can monitor how much they understand and intervene, but sometimes, all the student needs is a little time to process the information.

Lynette Willis
 SENCo and Senior Leader
 The Coppice Spring Academy

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The Toynbee School - Supporting SEN and visually impaired students in art



I am head of art in a non-selective, one thousand strong, community school, The Toynbee School, in the heart of Chandler's Ford, Hampshire. We have the honour of being a resource in the education of visually impaired (VI) students. This, when coupled with the dedicated SEND department, continues to be the catalyst for the specific requirements and unique differentiation that needs constant review due to their changing physical limitations with their sight and mobility.

My 2022/23 case study demonstrates snapshots of the strategies that have been successful with The Toynbee School's Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 art students. The teachers and support staff all understand the unique variations in motivations, abilities, and learning strategies. The outcomes that we have implemented are not something that can necessarily be transposed across all schools but does give a *flavour* of our current methods used to deliver success for our students with SEND and VI. One thing I have personally learnt in my fourteen years of teaching children aged 2-19 in both the state and public arenas, is that taking risks, patience and experimentation are key.

Transition

I initially assessed where the majority of our Key Stage 3 students came from to establish a baseline, with 70% linked to one effective feeder primary school. I am delighted to say that community links were made, skills and knowledge learnt, alongside schemes of work which were exchanged and celebrated amongst our art specialists. Barriers and successes were also revealed to establish a shared understanding of the differing starting points of our students with SEND support needs and VI, aiding our planning and support for our students.

Classroom and school environment

Inclusivity and success are key to motivating all students. I conducted a school art inclusivity survey, walking around my department, front of school and art displays to see if the environment represented all students including those with SEN support and VI needs. With the full support of my senior leadership team and art colleagues, all art showcases and *working wall* displays were amended. We ensured they would now represent a broad spectrum of talented Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 students, highlighting the best efforts of all students including the strengths of our students with SEND. This inclusive approach notably increased self-esteem of all pupils and enhanced relations with students, teachers, and parents/carers alike; rapid results were produced with numerous VI students drawing clear aspiration from this inclusive approach. One student was highly emotional as they mentioned they had never experienced their work on display in any of the schools they had attended. This was an extremely rewarding and sobering moment.

“We ensure all art classrooms have a quiet wall area to assist our autistic students.”

A subsequent environment trial we initiated was to ensure all art classrooms have a *quiet wall* area to assist our autistic students. Some of our students struggle with over stimulation or sensory overload, which can be common in a visual arts department due to the nature of the subject. Furthermore, a variety of GCSE grade samples are represented in displays; previously this was only higher-grade examples, but now the full spectrum is displayed to represent grades that all students can aspire to. With many students with SEND and VI not able to achieve the highest assessment mark, it now shows what success will look like for all regardless of differing starting points.

Classroom strategies and considerations used to plan inclusive lessons in art

How did I support learners who struggled to access lessons because of literacy difficulties?

I found key word lists to aid spelling, chunking of tasks, visual aids/story boards, allowing access to laptops to speed up output and spell checking of written work useful for all students including those with SEND support needs and VI students.

How did I support learners who struggled with fine motor skills?

Differentiation through art materials:

- Swapping pencils for clay or at GCSE artists
- Hyper-realistic styles for more abstract forms created more accessibility for some students with SEND and VI students.

Some students lacking ruler skills found using the edge of their table easier to ensure work was straight. Giving students half an image and they draw the other half also helped with spatial awareness (LSAs supported where available).

How did I support learners who needed additional time to develop conceptual understanding?

I gave students with SEND support needs and VI students longer in tests to formulate an answer or to read, write or type the answer. I did not put these students on the spot through questioning. I presented a question to a class at the start of the lesson, allowing them more processing time to answer at the end of the lesson.

How did I ensure access for learners with a physical disability?

I created a balance between maintaining the independent learning skills of the students with SEND support or VI needs but allowed the VILSA or LSA to support with layout, transitions, eg when the student changed their use of resources or technique and when packing away.

How did I support learners who struggled to retain vocabulary?

Spelling tests, key words and definition worksheets, repetition through teacher talk, chunking of tasks, phonics in the art classroom and testing knowledge and understanding through visual aids and *Reading and literacy in art* classroom displays.

Curriculum

“The case study is an organic, evolving process as no two students are ever the same and knowing your students well is always a crucial factor.”

We are aware as practitioners that if a pupil feels represented, they then feel valued.

After a full, whole school curriculum review this academic year, art schemes of work have been updated to feature artists and designers with SEND needs and VI working in creative industries. These established artists and designers now feature in all Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 art and textile projects to inspire students socially and academically.

This case study has been essential in making sure all students with SEND support needs and VI students are accessing, progressing, and enjoying the arts curriculum in my school setting and feel represented. The case study is an organic, evolving process as no two students are ever the same and knowing your students well is always a crucial factor. *‘Putting myself into my SEN support and VI students’ shoes’* more this academic year has been rewarding and beneficial for all our art students at The Toynebee School.

Ms A. Goldsmith

Head of Art, The Toynebee School

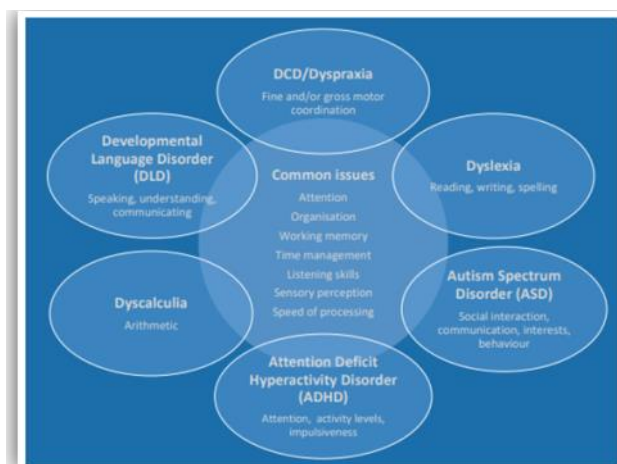
Making the classroom accessible for all: language and literacy

The Communication and Interaction Team (C&I) has been working with HIAS for several years through Resource Provision (RP) network meetings which are run virtually every term for RPs for specific learning difficulties, and speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). The purpose of these meetings is for HIAS to provide national and local updates, best practice in teaching and to share new knowledge or resources that would be useful to the RPs. As speech and language therapists and specialist teacher advisers, we have specialist knowledge and experience to offer to the RP networks (and beyond) on a range of topics, for example, speech sound development, supporting vocabulary development, behaviour as a means of communicating a message, to the language of emotions, and pre-literacy/literacy support. The latter is a topic we have been exploring with the RPs this year.

We have written this article together to explore the links between language and literacy. Many people have heard of dyslexia but they may not have heard of Developmental Language Disorder (DLD).

It is essential that we are aware of the strengths and challenges individuals with dyslexia and DLD may have and encounter. Our role in understanding, providing focused support and making classroom adjustments will not only have a positive impact on pupils with dyslexia and/or DLD but on all pupils. *The understanding neurodiversity, a guide to specific learning differences*, funded by the Department for Education, demonstrates the co-occurring difficulties that neurodivergent pupils may experience.

In this article, we will be further developing our understanding of how to support pupils who have dyslexia, DLD or a difficulty in reading and spelling through adaptations and adjustments to teaching, learning and the classroom environment.




[https://cdn.bdadyslexia.org.uk/uploads/documents/Dyslexia/A Guide to SpLD 2nd ed.pdf?v=1554931179](https://cdn.bdadyslexia.org.uk/uploads/documents/Dyslexia/A%20Guide%20to%20SpLD%202nd%20ed.pdf?v=1554931179).

What is dyslexia?

In 2009, the *Identifying and teaching children and young people with dyslexia and literacy difficulties* report was published. This document provides a definition of dyslexia (Rose, 2009) and an overview of the challenges that an individual with dyslexia may experience in addition to reading and spelling.

What is dyslexia? Rose, 2009

Primarily affects skills involved in accurate and fluent **word reading and spelling**.

- Characteristic features – **difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory, and verbal processing speed**. 
- **It is a continuum** with no clear cut off points.
- **It occurs across the range of intellectual abilities**.
- **Co-occurring difficulties** may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration, and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia.
- A good indication of the **severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties** can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention.

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) has adopted Rose’s definition but also acknowledges the visual and auditory processing difficulties that some individuals with dyslexia can experience and points out that dyslexic readers can show a combination of abilities and difficulties that affect the learning process. Some also have strengths in other areas, such as design, problem solving, creative skills and oral skills.

Prevalence



10% of the population are believed to be dyslexic.

However, not everyone who is dyslexic has a diagnosis.

www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexia.

What is DLD?

Dyslexia and DLD – do they co-occur?

Current evidence suggests that dyslexia and DLD are distinct but can occur together. Learners with DLD have difficulties with language comprehension. Many also find word reading and reading comprehension challenging.

“...it is important that researchers, practitioners, and the public are aware that dyslexia and DLD are distinct but often co-occurring disorders. Although the exact rates of co-occurrence will depend on the specific diagnostic criteria used for both dyslexia and DLD, it is likely that at least half of the children who are identified with reading disabilities in schools or clinics will have co-occurring DLD (G.M. McArthur et al 2000). In addition, many children with dyslexia who perform within normal limits on standardized language assessments may have subclinical language deficits that warrant monitoring and educational accommodations”.

What is developmental language disorder (DLD)?



Developmental language disorder is a diagnosis given when a child or adult has difficulties talking and/or understanding language.

The diagnosis is given when there is no other associated biomedical condition, eg autism, learning difficulties. When a biomedical condition is present, language difficulties are referred to as language disorder associated with X.

Key facts

- It affects an average of two children in every classroom.
- Whilst it starts in childhood it persists in adulthood.
- There is no known cause, but it may run in families.

Parallels and differences between DLD and dyslexia

Both require the child to have received adequate environmental stimulation: appropriate reading instruction for dyslexia and adequate language interactions for DLD.

Differences include phonological deficits which can be seen in dyslexia whereas multi-dimensional language deficits are found in DLD. The bubble diagram below shows the areas of language that can be affected in DLD.

Regardless of the specific diagnostic label,



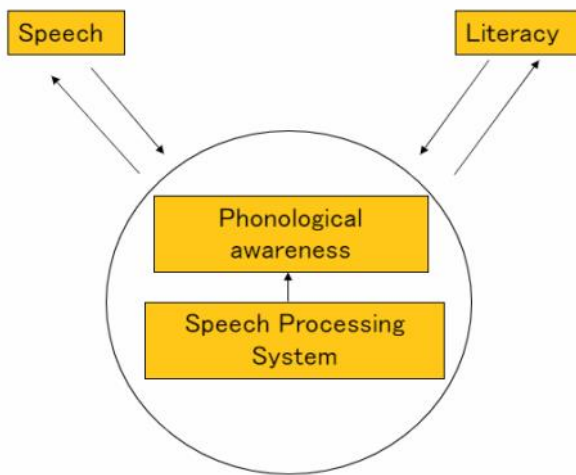
intervention should target the learner’s strengths and specific needs across all domains of language (Adolf & Hogan, 2018

https://pubs.asha.org/doi/full/10.1044/2018_LSHSS-DYSLC-18-0049).

The link between speech, language, reading and writing

Stackhouse and Wells (2000) explain that both speech and literacy skills depend on the same underlying processes, or *the common root* known as the *speech processing system* which includes phonological awareness skills. They suggest that if a child has difficulties with *speech processing*, then they are vulnerable to literacy difficulties. Children who have had speech sound difficulties in the past often still have residual difficulties with phonological awareness.

Stackhouse and Wells (2000) as described in Elks, E and McLachlan, H



(2012) ELKLAN Language Builders

Phonological Awareness

“Phonological awareness is the explicit awareness of the sound structure of spoken words” (Gillon, 2005). This is seen in the research evidence-base as a pre-cursor skill to literacy development. A study by Snowling et al (2003) breaks down phonological awareness into three key components that children learn before entry to school at age three:

- syllable awareness - how many syllables/parts in a word?
- rhyming ability - do the end sounds of a word match?
- phonemic awareness - awareness of the individual sounds in a word.

Many children, especially those with persistent speech sound errors (not lisping, dropping h’s or glottal stopping in ‘*bottle*’) will struggle to develop literacy skills, often as a result of weaker than average phonological awareness abilities. These are the children that we need to work jointly with to support, but how do we spot those who need intervention?

What does weak phonological awareness look like in our students?

Children who present in the following ways *may* have weaker phonological awareness skills:

- the student can hear but may not be able to make sense of what they hear
- the student may rely heavily on lip-reading
- the student needs you to repeat information more frequently
- the student may be able to copy from the board but will struggle if they cannot see the word
- the student can have difficulties analysing new words quickly and accurately
- letter-by-letter reading
- difficulties storing and/or accessing information about words due to incorrectly stored word sound information.

Targeting areas of phonological awareness deficit through intervention

There are several tools available to assess phonological awareness. The Highland Literacy provides a screen, resource booklet and tracking sheet for the initial assessment.

Activities and resources to support pupils with identified gaps are available on the website www.highlandliteracy.com/emerging-literacy/phonological-awareness.

Once a student has been identified as potentially needing input around phonological awareness skills, it is then important to identify the specific areas for intervention. Elklan (2011) breaks the main areas down into four categories:



It is essential that young people understand their strengths and needs in relation to phonological awareness – phonological awareness is a *meta* skill that involves thinking about and evaluating your own performance as a speaker. As a result, this skill can and needs to be worked in other speech and literacy work, for example when working with a student on spelling, it is helpful to spend some time breaking down words into individual sounds and then building them back up again – that way you target the skills of **segmenting** and **blending** all whilst teaching spellings too!

Being explicit in teaching spelling rules, and how some letters can be used to represent multiple sound combinations is beneficial. It can take some children much longer to learn the skills that we have briefly outlined above. Elklan (2012) gives a rough guide as to when these skills are typically learnt by:

Rhyming = 3 years

Syllable segmentation = 4 years

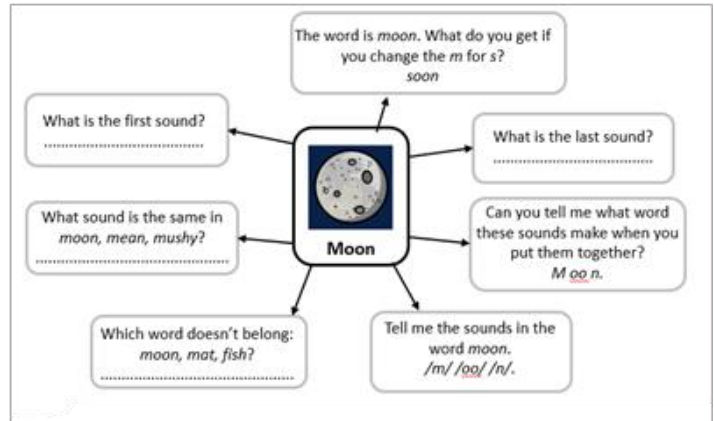
Blending phonemes = 5 years

Segmenting words = 6 years

It should be noted though that this is not a hard and fast rule, and that children will develop these skills at different rates and may not have entirely consolidated them by age six.

A catch-all resource for working on phonological awareness in school

Phonological word maps can be used to support phonological awareness. Below is an example which includes all four aspects of phonological awareness.



Mesmer and Kamback (2022) describe phonological awareness as focusing on the phonemes (sounds) in words, whereas, in phonics the focus is on learning the written format (graphemes), corresponding to these sounds (Ehri, 2020) cited in Mesmer and Kamback, 2022. They stress that developing phonological awareness is part of the process of learning to decode words and then comprehend what is being read, rather than an end goal in itself. Mesmer and Kamback (2022) advocate co-ordinating phonological awareness with teaching phonics, eg when teaching letter sounds at the beginning of words to develop phonological awareness skills, these should be the same sounds as those the child is focusing on in phonics; when teaching decoding in phonics, phonological awareness work should focus on blending and segmenting sounds.

Specific strategies for language and literacy

Many of the strategies which support children with dyslexia and DLD will support others in the class too.

Strategies to support reading

Accessing text on a whiteboard or electronic device



- Change background colour (pale colours may be better than white)
- Use a point size 12 - 14 font that's easy to read, eg Comic Sans
- Ensure the page layout is uncluttered
- Include pictures and diagrams to support text
- Use a text to speech facility, eg Immersive Reader
- Adjust the language and reading level of the text to suit the pupil.

Accessing text on a worksheet or in a book



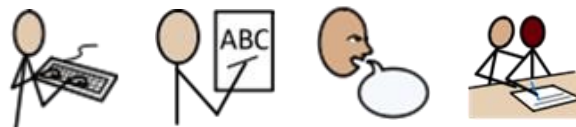
- Provide audio versions of novels and plays
- Show a video of novels and plays
- Provide a graphic novel or simplified version of the text
- Provide a reading pen
- Try a coloured overlay/reading ruler or print worksheets on the pupil's preferred coloured paper where possible – a buff colour may be better than white.
- Upload the worksheet onto an electronic device so that the pupil can use a text to speech facility to access the text.
- Ask the pupil to work in a pair with a peer who can support with reading.
- Divide the text into manageable sizes and amounts.

The British Dyslexia Association has a dyslexia style guide, which provides guidance on making text accessible <https://cdn.bdadyslexia.org.uk/uploads/documents/Advice/style-guide/BDA-Style-Guide-2023.pdf?v=1680514568>.

Strategies to support writing

Alternatives to handwriting

- Consider touch typing where appropriate
- Scribe
- Speech to text facility on electronic device



Writing process

- Use post it notes to support planning and sequencing ideas
- Writing frame
- Key spellings
- Word map with pictures for vocabulary
- Punctuation/letter formation prompt
- Talking tin – pupils record sentences to help them to remember what they want to write
- Use software to support writing, eg Clicker
- Leave space so the pupil can write answers directly onto worksheets
- Provide effective models
- Celebrate the writer's voice
- Plan breaks for the pupil

Reduce the writing demands so that learning is not limited by difficulties with writing.

- Provide copy of the date and learning outcome to stick in
- To avoid the pupil copying from the board, print the presentation for the child. Provide pre-drawn charts/diagrams to label
- Cloze procedure (filling in missing words in a piece of text)
- Sorting/matching activities
- Mind map
- Drama/video/talk
- Practical activity

Strategies to support spelling

Use mnemonics for irregular words

 **Said** – Sally Ann Is Dancing



 **Because** – Big Elephants Can't Always Use Small Exits

Look for words within words:

 **Island** – an island is land surrounded by water

 **Separate** – there is a rat in separate

Use pictures within words

the  e
the  r

Use colour for tricky parts of the word

n **igh** t

Break multisyllable words into syllables

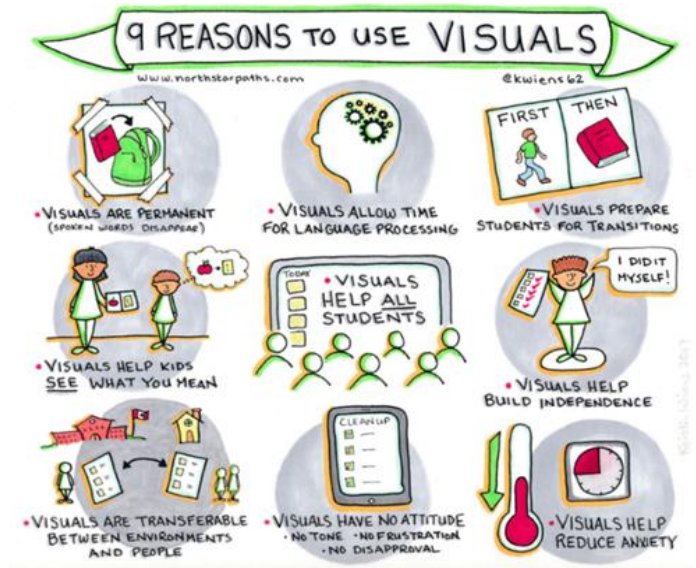
Lem on ade

Resources for spelling

- **Sound mat** – showing different ways of spelling the sounds the child is learning, eg oi/oy.
- **Word mat** with pictures and spellings of high frequency words and/or topic related words.
- **Learning spellings for regular words**
- Teach children to sound out words before writing them, rather than memorising a list of spelling words.
- Dictate sentences with words containing the sounds the child knows and is learning so that spellings are practised in context.

Using visuals

Pictures and symbols represent concepts or words and can be accessed regardless of literacy or language ability. They are therefore useful tools to support **ALL** pupils. Examples of reasons to use visuals and ways of doing so are summarised opposite.



North Star Paths www.northstarpaths.com

Visuals to support in the classroom environment

Appropriate use of visuals will vary according to the age of the pupils but could include:

- pictures/symbols alongside words to label things, eg cupboards, drawers
- a visual timetable
- pictures of key things to listen out for during whole class input/discussion/when watching videos – this will also help pupils' attention and focus.
- Checklists, eg of equipment to get out at the start of lessons/to take home
- visual task plan – task broken down into small steps with drawings/pictures
- mind maps summarising information
- visuals as part of a word map/word bank to explain the meaning of the word.

Visuals to support access to text

The example below shows part of a poem being studied by a Year 5 class and how it was adapted by adding Widgit symbols to enable it to be accessed more easily by a pupil with reading difficulties. When using Widgit, the symbols appear automatically as the words are typed.

What has happened to Lulu?

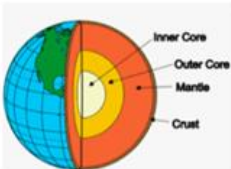


What has happened to Lulu mother?
 What has happened to Lu?
 There's nothing in her bed but an old rag doll
 And by its side a shoe

Why is her window wide mother?
 The curtain flapping free
 And only a circle on the dusty shelf
 Where her money box used to be?

Charles Causley

What has happened to Lulu, mother?
 What has happened to Lu?
 There's nothing in her bed but an old rag doll
 And by its side a shoe
 Why is her window wide mother?
 The curtain flapping free
 And only a circle on the dusty shelf
 Where her money box used to be?

Below is another example of how text can be made more accessible by simplifying it and adding visuals.

Standard Text Volcanoes	Simplified Text (Include a list of key words and pictures to accompany this)
<p>There are multiple layers which make up the structure of the earth. The outer layer is known as the crust. Underneath this is the mantle and in the centre of the earth is the core.</p> <p>The Earth's surface is comprised of tectonic plates which are continually moving at an extremely slow speed. These plates consist of the crust in addition to the upper part of the mantle. Sometimes these plates collide, resulting in one plate being pushed beneath the other and sinking down into the Earth's mantle. During this process the lower plate becomes hot and dehydrates, releasing water. The water is also hot and rises up into the mantle, lowering the pressure, resulting in the mantle rocks melting. These molten rocks then rise up too and when they erupt on the surface a volcano is formed.</p> <p>An alternative way volcanoes form is when plates separate. During this process magma rises up and erupts on the surface as lava at the point where the plates part from each other.</p> <p><u>References</u> https://www.britannica.com/science https://www.weatherwizkids.com/weather-volcano.htm https://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/hazards/volcanoes/home.html</p>	<p>Volcanoes</p> <p>Layers of the earth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are lots of different layers of the earth. • The outside layer is called the crust. • The next layer down is the mantle. • Deep inside the middle of the earth is the core. <p>Tectonic plates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tectonic plates cover the surface of the earth. • They are made up of the crust and part of the top part of the mantle. • How a volcano is formed Volcanoes can form when tectonic plates move together or apart. Plates moving together <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes the tectonic plates bump into each other and one plate slides under the other. • The bottom plate falls deep into the mantle. • This plate gets hot and loses water. The water is also hot. • Rocks in the mantle begin to melt. They move to the surface. • When the rocks erupt on the surface a volcano is formed.   

Implementing classroom adjustments for pupils with dyslexia or DLD will not only support pupils who are neurodiverse, it will have a positive impact on all children. Planning multi-sensory learning, appropriate resources, opportunities for overlearning and building the pupil's confidence will benefit every member of the class.

If you would like any support, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the HIAS English Team or the speech and language therapists and specialist teacher advisers.

During the English team's core provision meetings, strategies to support pupils with neurodiversity have been shared. English leaders have provided feedback on successful approaches and these have been collated to form a *SEN Support - Best Practice Guide*, which is available on Moodle+ <https://english.hias.hants.gov.uk/course/index.php?categoryid=398>.



Focus Child: Primary		
Area of SEN	Barriers to English	Suggested strategies
Dyslexia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slow processing Access to classroom resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-teach texts / concepts to be covered in the learning journey to allow for a longer processing time Remove unnecessary copying from board: date/title/L.O and where required provide a printout in front of the pupil for copying rather than the interactive whiteboard Removing distracting/unnecessary elements eg excessive images within tasks Provide photographs for easy reference Adjust fonts and/or colour of paper to the pupil's preference Adapt font/colour on PowerPoint slides Regular 'check-ins' during English lessons to clarify instructions Have 'dyslexia friendly' dictionaries available, that members of staff model and use

Speech and language therapists and specialist teacher advisers

Please also log on to the STAS Moodle where you will find a training session and resources around DLD among other resources and information <https://sta.mylearningapp.com>.

The STAS Moodle is free to access but requires a school to register with the STAS service. To register, please email: stas.service@hants.gov.uk.

The Communication and Interaction Team run ELKLAN courses annually, alongside toolkit sessions. Look out for the free DLD workshop, '*DLD around the world*' in October for school staff. For further information about courses and workshops please email stas.service@hants.gov.uk.

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Widgit Symbols © Widgit Software 2002-2023 www.widgit.com.

Resources

What is dyslexia video www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexia/about-dyslexia/what-is-dyslexia.

Graphic novels (GCSE texts)
www.schoolreadinglist.co.uk/reading-lists-for-ks4-school-pupils/graphic-novel-versions-of-gcse-english-texts.

Key Stage 2 Graphic novels for Key Stage 2 children aged 7-11 www.schoolreadinglist.co.uk/reading-lists-for-ks2-school-pupils/graphic-novels-for-ks2-children-aged-7-11.

Audiobooks <https://www.calibreaudio.org.uk/>.

RNIB Bookshare (not just for visually impaired)
www.rnib.org.uk/living-with-sight-loss/independent-living/reading-and-books/rnib-bookshare.

ICT support for children and young people

Clicker www.cricksoft.com/uk/clicker.

Immersive Reader www.support.microsoft.com/en-gb/office/use-immersive-reader-in-word-a857949f-c91e-4c97-977c-a4efcaf9b3c1.

Read aloud function in Word
www.support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/listen-to-your-word-documents-5a2de7f3-1ef4-4795-b24e-64fc2731b001

Dictate function in Word
www.support.microsoft.com/en-gb/office/dictate-your-documents-in-word-3876e05f-3fcc-418f-b8ab-db7ce0d11d3c.

iPad Apps for Learners with Dyslexia/ Reading and Writing Difficulties www.callscotland.org.uk/assets/files/ipad-apps-for-learners-with-dyslexia.pdf.

ICT for staff to produce visual support

Widgit www.widgit.com/products/index.htm.

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McArthur G M, Hogben J H, Edwards V T, Heath S M, Mengler, E D (2000). *On the 'specifics' of reading disability and specific language impairment*. *Journal of Child Psychology Psychiatry*, Oct, 41 (7) 869-74

Mesmer, H A, Kambach A (2022). *Beyond Labels and Agendas: Research Teachers need to know about Phonics and Phonological Awareness*. *The Reading Teacher*, 76, 62–72.

Raising Awareness of Developmental Language Disorder www.radld.org.

Rose J (2009). *Identifying and teaching children and young people with dyslexia and literacy difficulties: an independent report*.

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Stackhouse J, Wells B (2000). *Children's Speech and Language Difficulties 2. Identification and Intervention*. Whurr Publishers

Joint working between the:

Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service (HIAS) and The Communication and Interaction (CI) Team, Specialist Teacher Advisory Service

Top tips from HIAS subject inspector/ advisers for SEN support



Geography

Connect geography to the pupils' local area

Children should be supported to know what their area is like, giving them the grounding to move from geography at a local level to learning about places around the globe. This can be achieved through studying local maps and utilising *Google Street View*, exploring images of the physical and human landscape and by conducting fieldwork in the local area.

Take pupils to the geography and give a strong reason why it is important

Geography is grounded in the interconnections between people and places. Use real life stories or create characters to support pupils in learning about diverse people and places.

Vocabulary, vocabulary, vocabulary

Like many subjects, there are plenty of geographical keywords with many being complex. Help children to learn the most vital terms by pre-teaching keywords and dual coding. The visual builds a bridge to support children in seeing the meaning and remembering the term. Modelling how to use the vocabulary through our teacher talk and encouraging children to say the words and develop actions/movements is helpful. Arm movements showing the direction tectonic plates move, or the types of erosion are great examples.



Science

The chunking of substantive content into explicit, sequenced statements of learning, keeping this on display, and referred to frequently.

Delivering practical work in a step wise process, with a clear focus on what area of disciplinary knowledge is being instructed/ developed.

Less reliance on PowerPoint for delivery of knowledge. Clear modelling and explanations of complex science ideas, with a use of analogies where possible, and opportunities to rehearse and practise until fluent (SLOP).



History

Pre-teach the big concepts and key terms at the start of the lesson that children will need later in the lesson to answer the driving enquiry question, using what children already know and the stories/contexts they have already encountered in history. **Tell the story so far and make it visual.**

Make abstract ideas concrete through use of images, carefully scripted short role play reconstructions, actions analogies and stories.

Use the power of stories. Do not be tempted to pare down content to its simplest form to make it more accessible. Counter intuitively the role of background content is crucial to access content and understand the curriculum in history. Learning about the rich, complex stories in the past while emphasising the most important information and ideas will help not hinder the learning.



RE

Make it multi-sensory.

use images, songs, dance, film, and food to make the RE as meaningful as possible.

Make it concrete rather than abstract and begin with the child/young person's own experience to begin with.

If they do not have a relevant experience, create one for the whole class.

Use the pedagogy of the RE cycle of enquiry.

Which begins with the concrete examples from a child/young person's own life and encourages them to go from this to thinking about further examples from their own class.



PSHE/RSE

Be clear with your language.

Do not be ambiguous with terms and explanations.

Learn and understand what they have or have not learnt before.

Start with their own knowledge and build from there.

Talk to the adults in the pupils' lives and make them part of the learning process.

It will help break down any barriers.



Maths

Know your mathematics.

Rehearse the tasks you want the pupils to work on and be successful with. This tests out your own subject knowledge and allows you to see connections to other parts of mathematics before you teach. You need a clear understanding of required prior knowledge before tackling new ideas so that pupils start from a secure base.

Ask the right questions.

Plan insightful questions based upon ongoing assessment. This will enable you to offer personalised next steps in learning and give you a clear picture of each pupil's depth of understanding and fluency. Plan small, interim steps enabling time to teach abstract concepts to a secure level of understanding appropriate to the pupil.

Represent in different, equivalent, ways.

Pay attention to mathematical concepts and structures alongside, and often before, teaching procedures. Use manipulatives, diagrams, stem sentences and key vocabulary to reveal structure and demonstrate how the mathematics works and where it comes from, based on what the pupil already knows or has experienced.

Please use the link or the QR code to access the HIAS Maths *Best Practice Guide: SEND Case Study Good Practice Guidance - Mathematics* <https://maths.hias.hants.gov.uk/course/view.php?id=441>





English

Use assessment effectively to understand starting points and plan accordingly

Take time to identify and understand the barrier to learning for an individual child.

Consider cognitive load in task design

Remember less is more – focus on smaller chunks of knowledge, prioritise, and offer plenty of repetition and overlearning to secure familiarity of the key learning. Repetition is a key to success.

Have high expectations of all pupils and group pupils flexibly in the English learning journey.

Please use the QR code to access the HIAS English Best Practice Guide: *SEND Case Study Good Practice Guidance - English* <https://english.hias.hants.gov.uk/view.php?id=886>



PE

Student centred

Have knowledge of the level they are currently working at, as every student is different. Teach to the stage of development, not the age!

Differentiate through Space, Task, Environment and People (STEP)

To allow all students access to the lesson/activity and make progress.

Inclusion within the lesson/activity

Plan for all students to be physically included within the lesson/activity at some point. If they are completing a moderated version/parallel activity then always bring them back into the main group in some way wherever possible.



Art and Design

Use a range of art techniques to develop children's creativity and ideas

Know about any special educational needs outlined on the SEN register to make any reasonable adjustments for learning.

Introduce children to the work of artists, architects and designers to provide inspiration, to make learning come alive and stir curiosity

Use websites, provide visits to and by practitioners and galleries. Use this to inform a critical understanding about art from various times in history, different periods, styles and movements to the current day.

Develop an understanding of the visual language of art in using colour, pattern, textures, line, shape, form and space

Help children to understand and learn the art language by providing opportunities for key words in making, talking and writing by using pre-teaching and dual-coding.



Computing

Use unplugged activities

To introduce and reinforce concepts.

Greater use of physical computing and using the PRIMM (predict, run, investigate, modify, and make) pedagogy.

A greater focus on predict, run, investigate, and modify.



MFL

Invest time in investigating the best approach to phonics, which is set to become an integral part of MFL teaching

There are various packages available, including NCELP and the Sue Cave physical French phonics materials. Mastery of this will bring confidence and high levels of esteem to learners who find the pronunciation more difficult to access.

Use listening to model language, as opposed to solely as an assessment tool

Research and pupil voice shows that this is the skill pupils (and especially lower attainers) find hardest. They also associate it only with tests as opposed to with learning. A dive into *Breaking the sound barrier* by Gianfranco Conti and Steve Smith might well provide inspiration for this.

Get them talking. Group work, surveys, speaking the language in a noisy classroom supported by some kind of clear word mat or knowledge organiser is vital

This allows less confident learners to practise their skills under the cover of relative anonymity and without the fear of speaking in front of the whole class.



Music

Reduce cognitive load by breaking extended projects into short musical activities over time.

Consider varied approaches

Introducing creative tasks to suit individual needs, including demonstrating and modelling tasks, as well as visual and audio examples to assist understanding of new and/or abstract concepts.

Make the music department an open and welcoming place

A combination of nurturing a supportive and creative environment, clear and accessible wall displays, keeping spaces free of clutter, as well as a range of opportunities for all abilities will help you achieve this.



Teaching and learning

Use simple language and instructions

Also make sure that the prompts and supports that aid independence are on the tables in front of pupils.

Keep the context the same as other pupils and ensure all groups are flexible

This is to ensure that pupils can work with everyone at some point in the classroom.

Add visuals to texts

This can make a huge difference in both understanding and confidence.



Early Years

Understand what the child's interests are

What do they enjoy doing? What skills do they have? Ask their family and others who know them well in addition to your own observations.

Find out the child's starting point in learning, then plan small steps towards clear goals

Avoid trying to achieve new skills in one big jump which may be too challenging for the child and the adults supporting them.

Make sure that strategies to support the child are consistently used by all adults at your setting and home

Share ideas and feedback on how it is going and any adjustments that may be needed.

Why are parents feeling so frustrated with their children's school reports?



Over the past summer, through social media, I began to see that there is a real problem with the reports for students with SEND and how they are written by teachers. Often they can come across as careless, thoughtless and as though the teacher either does not know the student or the teacher is setting the student impossible to achieve goals going into the next academic year.

Because I have ADHD, and my child is going through the diagnosis process, I am a member of several online groups, and it is here you see the sheer frustration, anger and disbelief expressed by parents at their children's end-of-year reports. Screenshot upon screenshot is shared, and reading them from a parent's point of view, I can see what they are saying... but I'm also a teacher. And this is where I suddenly realise words we teachers use in what we think are harmless ways, are not. These words have become 'teacher-jargon', inadvertently damaging the relationship between teachers and parents.

That is because these words have different meanings when applied to children with SEND, which means that when parents read them, they interpret these reports differently from how the teachers intend them to be read.

Here's an example that is very similar to those I've seen in the groups. See if you can spot what would cause the child's parent to be upset with this. *"Claire has had a great year. She is very kind to all her friends and loves to take part in PE and music lessons. Claire needs to concentrate on her handwriting and focus on making sure her letters are fully formed, but the content of her written work is good."*

It's a fairly standard teacher comment, and most teachers would agree that this sounds like Claire has a fairly good report – so why would a parent find this report frustrating?

What is missing from this report is that Claire's parent is aware that Claire loves the more practical, hands-on lessons... but struggles with lessons that require more handwritten work. Claire is easily distracted and often gets out of her seat and wanders the room during these tasks. Over the years, she has got into trouble for this. Claire does complete the work, but it is often done in a rush at the end of the lesson, meaning her handwriting is messy and does not sit neatly on the lines.

"To Claire's parent, it feels like Claire has been set an impossible target."

Claire's parent knows her focus is poor and she struggles to concentrating – she always has, but they now understand that it is part of her recently diagnosed ADHD. Claire's parent has had many meetings with Claire's class teacher and the SENCO about Claire and how to support her... but now in her report, her teacher is asking her to do something they know she is not very good at and struggles with. To Claire's parent, it feels like Claire has been set an impossible target because the report clearly says she *needs to concentrate on her handwriting and focus on making sure her letters are fully formed*. Concentration and focus... she can't do those things well at all, and she has only just been diagnosed. It feels like all those meetings were for nought – does the teacher not understand Claire's struggles? are they not accommodating Claire's needs? are they putting the agreed accommodations in place? All these questions are going through Claire's parent's head.

“Parents understand all children will be given something to improve on for next year.”

From a teacher’s perspective, the words *focus* and *concentrate* are being used interchangeably with the word *target*. In Claire’s case, her teacher just wanted her to work on improving her handwriting. A better way of wording the teacher’s comment could have been, “*Claire has had a great year. She is very kind to all her friends and loves to take part in PE and music lessons. Claire needs to work on improving her handwriting, making sure her letters are fully formed, but the content of her written work is good.*” The changes are very slight, so there will not be a huge workload impact on teachers, but the meaning is the same. But to the parents, this wording is much less distressing and is not asking their child to do something they cannot do – after all, any improvement is an improvement, and parents understand all children will be given something to improve on for next year – that is reasonable. But you’re not asking them to do something that feels impossible or feels like you’re targeting their disability.

In fact, several schools are removing the word *target* from the school vocabulary, meaning teachers are having to use alternative words to convey what they want students to work on. I’ve heard several reasons for this, one being that the word *target* puts too much pressure on students. Because schools are trying to reduce pressure on students and change the language to make school less stressful, teachers have unintentionally invented a lot of *teacher jargon*, which can confuse parents and students – especially those with SEND, and those who think in a dichotomous manner.

Language is so important when speaking to students and parents, but even more so in written communication such as reports, because you are not there to expand upon phrases and words used to clarify meaning. Reports are often sent home with the students or in the post, right at the

end of term, so there is often little time for the parents to discuss with the teacher the intricacies of the report.

Another example is when one page of a child’s report says they are ‘meeting age-related expectations’ for a subject, only for the teacher to then write in the comments that the child is *excelling* in the subject. The parent reads this as two very different things – if my child is *excelling*, why are they only ‘meeting age-related expectations’, shouldn’t they be at ‘greater depth’ if ‘excelling’ means to be performing exceptionally well? However, the teacher is comparing the student’s current progress, to prior progress, and the student is doing exceptionally well, given how difficult they had previously found the subject, and to now be attaining ‘age-related expectations’ is exceptional – for that student. Nevertheless, this has not been made clear to the parents and is confusing to them, so they may end up wondering if the report is accurate, or if it has just been copied and pasted from another child’s report in error.

This is not just limited to one phase of school either – this is across the board, from Reception pupils to those in Year 11. We, as teachers, have to understand that the language we use has an impact, not just for our students in our lessons, but for parents too. There is so much CPD about making things explicit and clear for our students in lessons, but I wonder how many parents think their child’s school is not meeting their child’s needs because of this *language barrier* and want to/or do end up changing their child’s school when actually, the only issue was one of language?

Language is important, and how we use it will really help us develop the relationships we have as teachers with parents. When writing reports, carefully think about the use of language and how parents may interpret this, because sometimes written communication does not always convey what we intend it to.

Jazz McCullough is a science teacher at ‘Inclusion Education’ in Basingstoke

Useful resources and links

- **NASEN** offer a range of free and paid for resources, from their twilight talks, to their events: www.nasen.org.uk/events, along with other resources: www.nasen.org.uk/resources?title=&field_category_target_id%5B697%5D=697. Just sign up for a free membership.
- **Whole School SEND** – they have an excellent teacher handbook document which every teacher should have! Sign up for free www.wholeschoosend.org.uk/resources/teacher-handbook-send. They have also developed a range of online CPD units. Details can be found here: www.wholeschoosend.org.uk/page/online-cpd-units.
- The **Autism Education Trust** have a range of resources to support schools: www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/resources.
- The **National Autistic Society** offers training (at a cost), but these get booked up in advance www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/professional-development/training-and-conferences.
- The **Council for Disabled Children**, offer free e-courses. See details here: www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/what-we-do-0/e-learning
- The Dyspraxia Foundation have a range of handouts under their advice tab on their website https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/what_is_dyspraxia/dyspraxia-at-a-glance
- **The Children's Trust** supports schools, families, and children with a brain injury. They have a section on their website on returning to education: www.thechildrenstrust.org.uk/brain-injury-information/info-and-advice/return-to-education.
- **Speech and Language UK** have helpful tools and resources related to SLCN: <https://.speechandlanguage.org.uk/talking-point/for-professionals/the-communication-trust/more-resources>.
- The **British Dyslexia Association** has a great dyslexia friendly style guide: <https://.bdadyslexia.org.uk/advice/employers/creating-a-dyslexia-friendly-workplace/dyslexia-friendly-style-guide>.
- **Understood** have a page on their website with information on dyscalculia www.understood.org/articles/what-is-dyscalculia.
- The **SLCF** website hosts the SLCF free professional development tools, developed by the Communication Trust. These set out the key skills and knowledge needed by the children and young people's workforce to support the speech, language and communication development of all children and young people www.slcframework.org.uk.
- The **SEMH** website www.semh.co.uk/ has a range of useful resources, blogs and information.
- The **Childrens Commissioner** has a portal to help support improving attendance. The Back into School portal has resources for families, children, young people, and schools www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/back-into-school.
- **SEN magazine** website and online magazine, provides a wealth of support. The resources page of the website has some excellent links www.senmagazine.co.uk.
- **SEND Network** have a wealth of chat rooms, resources and podcasts which are free <https://.send-network.co.uk/rooms/podcasts>.
- **The SENDcast** provides a free weekly SEND podcast, released every Thursday, to sign up click here: www.thesendcast.com.

- **SEND Matters** is run by Gary Aubin of the *Lone SENDCO* fame. The website has some resources and guides to help busy SENCO's www.sendmatters.co.uk/downloads.
- **Beacon House** offer a wealth of resources which can be downloaded for free and used in school: www.beaconhouse.org.uk/resources.
- **Dr Pooky Knightsmith** has a huge range of fantastic resources, presentation, worksheets, and articles www.pookyknightsmith.com.
- **Jamie Clark** is a teacher who devises one-page summaries on books and key techniques such as *Explicit instruction*, *Making every lesson count*, *Cognitive load theory*, *Why don't students like school?* and much more. They are incredibly accessible and are an excellent addition for any staff room www.jamieleeclark.com/graphics.
- **Shaun Woodward** is a teacher, who specialises in SEMH. His blog, *Your calm classroom* provides a wealth of practical resources and strategies for teachers to use. They are completely accessible too: www.yourcalmclassroom.com
- **Karl C. Pupè**, aka **The Action Hero Teacher** website has some blogs on classroom management/behaviour and relationships www.actionheroteacher.com/blog. There is a blog with some good tips on managing behaviour www.actionheroteacher.com/post/3-types-of-classroom-management-you-must-avoid-to-be-an-excellent-teacher.
- **Mark Dickson** has a really useful Padlet, with links to resources, papers and articles all on high expectations www.padlet.com/mark_dickson_digital/btjf7k0y7nv5s0xe.
- **ADDitude** have this handout on **ADHD and intense emotions** www.additudemag.com/download/adhd-intense-emotions-causes-strategies.
- **ADHD Foundation and NHS London CAMHS** have released a free resource for teenagers, 'A teenager's guide to ADHD'. This is a great resource to add to your toolkit: www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/ADHD_Found_Takeda_TeenagerBooklet_May2023.pdf
- **Sarah Johnson** has developed a free resource to support children displaced through war and conflict: www.phoenixgrouphq.com/files/ugd/bbe3de_dedaaed846bc466d867b17b99483164f.pdf
- **Barking and Dagenham** have put together *The SEMH Handbook*, a free resource to support classroom practitioners <https://bdsip.co.uk/resources/semh-handbook>.
- There are a number of free webinars by **#succeed with dyslexia**: www.succeedwithdyslexia.org/webinars on inclusive learning – focused on dyslexia, and webinars on **dyscalculia**.
- The following website offers a range of free resources aimed at primary schools on teaching children about **neurodiversity**, through their programme called *Learning about neurodiversity at school (LEANS)* www.salvesen-research.ed.ac.uk/leans.
- This handout goes through how to make learning environments more inclusive <https://www.gheel.ie/autism-favourable-environments>.
- Great set of resources on behaviour management, based on Bill Rogers' work www.dropbox.com/s/fp3nncd4zbnrmwj/VHS%20CLIPS.pdf?dl=0.
- Adele Bates has developed a set of free resources for teacher to use to support with behaviour: <https://adelebateseducation.co.uk/freebies/>

LA resources

- SEN Support guidance for schools <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/sen-support.pdf>
- Primary Behaviour Service <https://pbs.hants.gov.uk/home>
- Primary Behaviour Service, Information and advice <https://pbs.hants.gov.uk/information-and-advice>
- Specialist Teacher Advisory Service <https://sta.mylearningapp.com>
- Hampshire Educational Psychology www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/educationalpsychology
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance, Hampshire County Council good practice guidance for schools and other support agencies <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/EBSA-good-practice-guidance.pdf>
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance, Information booklet for young people www.documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/EBSA-CYP-Information.pdf
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance, Information for parents and carers www.documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/EBSA-Parents-and-Carers-Information.pdf
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight Virtual School and College for children in care www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/virtual-school
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight Virtual School and College <https://virtualschool.hants.gov.uk>.

Naomi Carter

School Improvement Manager – Specialist Provision and Inclusion, HIAS

Courses 2023/24

Details of our upcoming SEN courses and networks are provided below. Visit our [SEN courses Moodle](#) page or scan the QR code for our full catalogue of SEN professional learning opportunities.

How to book

All training can be booked via the Learning Zone. To search for a specific course, type the keywords provided in the *Find Learning* box, then click *See Classes* for details of available dates and times.

Learning Zone guidance

Visit our Learning Zone Moodle information page for Guidance on accessing the Learning Zone and managing bookings.

<https://hias-moodle.mylearningapp.com/mod/page/view.php?id=481>.

Need help?

To speak to a member of the HTLC bookings team, please contact:

Email: htlc.courses@hants.gov.uk.



SEN Courses <https://sen.hias.hants.gov.uk/course/view.php?id=5>

Primary Autumn 2 23/24 Primary SENCO Network (Webinar)

Networking is an essential opportunity for SENCO's to collaborate with other professionals who understand the challenges of the role and to share good practice.

Attending these networks offers an opportunity to build professional relationships that in turn enhance inclusive education across Hampshire.

The primary SENCO network is designed to ensure that you are regularly updated around key information and good practice across Hampshire schools. They are designed to support you in your role in ensuring the inclusion and progress of children with SEND in our primary schools.

The sessions will be designed to ensure that we are enhancing your knowledge, skills and understanding so that in turn you are able to effectively identify, assess and meet the needs of our pupils with SEND.

29 November 2023



Autumn SENCO Network




Sub £45 / SLA £30 / Full £54



Spring and Summer 23/24 Primary SENCO Networks (Webinars)

Learning outcomes:

- Ensuring that SENCOs have a comprehensive understanding of the latest legislations, policies and strategies around SEND.
- Learning about various assessment and identification tools and strategies including early intervention observations.
- Understanding the process of developing, implementing and monitoring child centred support plans, promoting inclusion in the mainstream classroom.
- Awareness of support available from interactive (outside) agencies. Building effective partnerships across all agencies and stakeholders.
- Expanding awareness of technology and specialised resources to enhance the learning experience and outcomes for pupils with SEND.
- Sharing good practice in relation to all the above.

 Spring - 20 March 2024
Summer 1 - 15 May 2024
Summer 2 - 10 July 2024


 Spring - *Spring SENCO Network*
Summer - *Summer SENCO Network*


 Sub £45 / SLA £30 / Full £54


Secondary Autumn, Spring and Summer 23/24 Secondary SEN Networks

The primary aims of the subject network meetings are to:

- Ensure a clear understanding of the national picture and its application in local and school contexts.
- Support effective subject leadership as appropriate to each school's individual context.
- Develop skills, expertise and capacity within school subject leaders and their teams through quality strategic CPD and the sharing of good practice.
- Deepen understanding of subject specific pedagogy and knowledge that underpins good progress and attainment for ALL pupils.
- Facilitate school to school networking and develop strength across the system.

 Autumn - 17 October 2023
Spring - 23 January 2024 (Webinar)
Summer - 30 April 2024 (Webinar)

 Autumn - *Secondary Autumn SEN*
Spring - *Secondary Spring SEN*
Summer - *Secondary Summer SEN*

 Autumn - Sub £75 / SLA £40 / Full £90
Spring - Sub £50 / SLA £40 / Full £60
Summer - Sub £50 / SLA £40 / Full £60

Cross-phase

Hampshire Special Educational

The theme for the conference this year is: **adopting a strengths based approach to supporting students with SEND.**

Attendees will gain insights into the positive impact of focusing on students' strengths and abilities, rather than solely on their challenges. The conference will provide a platform for sharing best practices, research findings, and practical strategies to enhance the educational experiences of students with SEND.

Learning outcomes:

- Understand the principles and benefits of a strengths-based approach in supporting students with SEND.
- Explore strategies for identifying and harnessing students' strengths and abilities.
- Gain insights into successful case studies and real-life examples of the strengths-based approach in action.
- Learn practical techniques for fostering positive regard, self-advocacy, and confidence in students with SEND.
- Network with experts and professionals dedicated to promoting a child centred, strengths-based approach.

 31 January 2024

 *Special Conference*

 Sub £160 / SLA £65 / Full £192

Future courses

Assistive Technology Project

What is AT? How do I utilise the accessibility tools within our existing productivity platforms? If you're apprehensive about technology this may sound like IT jargon.

In this course we will explore these concepts and more in an easy-to-follow way:

we will delve into the world of accessibility tools and assistive technology (AT) and how you can utilise the existing tools already available to your school to enhance both the educational experiences of your students, particularly those with additional needs, and of staff who are or may be neurodivergent (particularly Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia).

- We will start with an overview of existing tools that are commonly available in Hampshire schools, particularly Microsoft's accessibility features, and demonstrate how to make the most of them
- In addition, we will look into additional plugins that are beneficial for staff and students. They will save you time, make you more productive and help you to have a more accurate, easily accessible overview of support in place for your students
- Our course will include a brief introduction to SEND, neurodiversity in particular, and the importance of accessibility and AT in supporting pupils and staff with these needs. We will conclude by sharing further low-cost training available to help you even further
- This course is suitable for schools that use Microsoft 365.

Please contact Frances Akinde frances.akinde@hants.gov.uk to register your interest.

Resourced Provision Networks

This is a support and discussion forum for schools with Resourced Provisional unit.

For dates and more information for the network meeting, please see Resource Provision Networks: <https://sen.hias.hants.gov.uk/course/view.php?id=45>

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Resources

Moodle: <https://sen.hias.hants.gov.uk>

Hampshire SEN Support Toolkit: <https://sen.hias.hants.gov.uk/course/view.php?id=50>

Isle of Wight SEN Support Toolkit: <https://sen.hias.hants.gov.uk/course/view.php?id=51>

SEN Support Line: <https://forms.office.com/e/mrX19kBP82>

Also from HIAS!

Publications: If you enjoyed reading this curriculum update why not take a look to see what other publications are produced by the Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service. You will find a list of publications on our website at:

www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/hias/curriculum-support.

Moodles: Have you visited the HIAS Moodles? The Moodle sites include top-quality resources, training and course materials – see: <https://hias-moodle.mylearningapp.com/>. Do not forget to sign up to our site news pages so we can keep you up to date with the latest news and training opportunities from the HIAS subject teams.

Moodle+ offers access to a wide range of high-quality resources for subject leads and teachers for all key stages in primary and secondary and is available by subscription. For more information email HIAS Publications: hias.publications@hants.gov.uk.