

Quality First Teaching – strategies to support learning needs in the classroom

All students are entitled to a well - differentiated supportive learning experience in the classroom. Teachers should plan for all students from their current starting points and regularly review what steps need to be taken to aid progression. Please consult one page profiles on SIMs for short and long term targets for students labelled as SEN support on the register.

If a child is not making good or fast enough progress, teachers and departments intervene in the first instance to support the child by using some of the strategies contained within this document about our students' needs:

ASD, ADHD/ODD, HI, VI, SEMH, Attachment theory, SLCN, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, impulsivity and dyspraxia.

If a child is still making insufficient progress then a referral (via the SEND/EAL referral form) will need to be completed to investigate if there are specific learning barriers and what support is best needed to aid progress.

Where a child is deemed to have a set of needs that are continuing barriers to learning and all interventions have been considered the school may then apply for an EHC plan to seek extra support.

Triggers for intervention:

- Continues to make little or no progress over a long period
- Continues to work below expected levels of progress
- Continues to have difficulty in developing literacy or numeracy skills
- Has emotional and/ or social difficulties which impact on learning of self and others
- Has sensory or physical problems and requires additional support
- 1:1 interventions/ small group interventions on a regular basis
- Ongoing communication and/or interaction difficulties that impact on learning (including EAL)

Possible Interventions

- Educational Psychologist
- Speech and Language Team (also referred to as SALT)
- Short term and long term targets
- Visual timetables
- Additional equipment
- EAL withdrawal group

- External small group interventions
- Staff CPD
- Discussion with L.A. consultants such as EP, SENAT L and SPLD consultant
- CAMHS/CAF
- Counselling
- Referral to the School Nurse
- Work with alternative provision
- SEND/EAL Team referral
- Work with the Safeguarding Team
- Learning Mentors
- Other External Agencies such as Murray Hall

Parental consent/ engagement would be a recommended part of this process

Working with an Additional Adult

Key Principles

- Know the additional role (LSA/LSP/EP/ SALT/ Technician)
- Communication about progress and outcomes should be taking place between the adults in the lesson
- Students should be aware of the equal authority of both adults
- Work creatively with any support - Winston (SEND champion in Maths) has used support to target underachievers and absentees for catch up when SEND students are absent or are already making progress on particular topics
- Please don't send Support staff away if by any chance sets and staff have changed until the end of the lesson. Contact NHU who will assign them to the correct group next lesson.

Quality First Time Teaching: Key Principles and Strategies

- Have a seating plan – adapt as appropriate
- Consider group activities, make the most of peer support
- Additional time for expectations about behaviour and presentation
- Key words in context or even the structure of the lesson on the board
- Use the rewards and sanctions available
- Have examples of completed work
- Differentiate outcomes as well as tasks and make these explicit

Working with ASD students

- Keep language clear
- Slow down and give students time to understand
- Check their understanding of the instructions
- Do not insist on eye contact
- Let them know whenever possible when there is going to be a change of routine
- Keep calm, to help them stay calm
- Remember that some students take things literally
- Tell them what to do rather than not what to do
- Understand boundaries and social space
- Consider how you introduce a topic
- Some students need sensory breaks (this doesn't mean leaving the classroom)
- Anticipate difficult times for students and plan ahead

EXTRA INFO:

AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER

- Seat student in an area of classroom free from busy displays and distractions. Try to keep the area around the whiteboard / IWB 'clutter free'.
- use very clear classroom routines, e.g. lining up at the start, equipment check, students holding an object when it is their turn to talk.
- Display classroom rules and routines, illustrated by pictures, for students to refer to.
- Constantly reinforce student social skills e.g. proactively teach what to say/do when praised, how to ask for help. Always tell the student what to do rather than what not to do.
- Illustrate expectations visually – for example, use symbols to indicate noise levels i.e. partner voices, group voices, classroom voice, social voices.
- Support oral presentations/explanations with charts, diagrams, pictures, real objects or mime.
- Set tasks with clear goals (“Write three sentences on” rather than “Write about...”) and write worksheets in step-by-step form.
- Use a visual way of showing the student what they/the class will be doing, such as a sequenced series of pictures (a visual timetable), clockface divided into sections (or a digitalised clock with times below), a written list etc.
- Use timeline of events with branches to show where student will have deadlines or changes to face.
- Use short simple instructions. Give one at a time and check for understanding. Repeat instructions in same words rather than different ones. Ask students to repeat them back to you.

- Use student's name before asking a question or giving an instruction.
- Set explicit and clear expectations e.g. how many lines to write, how many questions to answer, how long to listen (use timer).
- Put a green 'start' dot on the student's book and line to show where to finish. Use in and out boxes for work to be done and work that is finished.
- Support writing with writing frames, cloze procedure templates (e.g. writing up a science experiment), Q & A boxes etc.
- Avoid or explain metaphorical language and idiom like 'pull your socks up', 'it's raining cats and dogs', 'in a minute'.
- Involve the student by asking direct, closed questions at their level of understanding.
- If a student goes off at a tangent, direct conversation back to the topic in hand; 'Right now we are talking about volcanoes'.
- Prevent repetitive questioning or commenting during class discussion by giving student a set number of cards to give you each time they wish to contribute to discussion – when cards are gone, no more questions.
- Allow student to work alone rather than in a group where possible. If in a group, give clear roles within the group and put the rules and roles into writing.
- Try to avoid tasks which depend solely on talking or writing about imagined experiences.
- Try to avoid tasks which depend solely on empathy (e.g. in literature, history, geography, skills and citizenship/PSHE).
- Use incentives based on student's interests e.g. a pause every hour to focus on their particular interest, once they have completed their work.
- Use immediate and individualised reward systems e.g. collecting a number of points.
- If student becomes anxious allow him/her to remove self to an agreed calm-down area.
- Explain any unplanned changes of routine to the student in advance.
- Provide student with a symbol card to display when he or she wants help.
- Provide a structure for unstructured time e.g. club rather than break-time outside.
- Model to the student that making mistakes is OK and part of the learning process.

ADHD/ODD

ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER / ADDITIONAL NEEDS IN RELATION TO CONCENTRATION / WORKING MEMORY AND IMPULSIVITY/ Oppositional Defiance Disorder

Strategies are broken down into two parts. Those dealing primarily with attention deficit i.e. limited concentration / working memory and those dealing with hyperactivity disorder i.e. impulsivity and disruptive behaviour.

Limited Concentration

- Establish a set seat for the student. Ideally, seat the student near the front with their back to the majority of the class and, if possible, between two settled students who can act as good role models. Present as a supportive rather than punitive measure, “Joe, I am doing this because you concentrate better here.”
- Seat student in an area of the classroom free from busy displays and distractions. Try to keep the area around the whiteboard / IWB ‘clutter free’.
- During teacher-talk, allow the student to fiddle with a piece of blu-tac, rubber band, squeeze ball or another chosen object (something quiet!) whilst maintaining eye contact.
- Give instructions simply and clearly. Make sure the student is looking at you first. Check that he or she has understood them.
- Ask the student to repeat instructions back to you. Try to ask them to show you what they should be doing, rather than asking them to tell you.
- During class discussions, proactively ‘retune’ the student back into the lesson by interspersing more challenging questions with simple questions addressed directly to those who tend to ‘drift off’.
- Rather than relying on a ‘hands up if you can tell me’ routine during class discussion, instead put all students’ names on cards and pick them at random. This pressure, when used sensitively, can keep students focused who otherwise allow others to take leading roles during class discussion.
- Use a timer to help the student complete a task in a specified period of time.
- Devise a private signal system to let the student know when they are off task.
- Plan in ‘settling time’ at the start of lessons. Ask for 2 minutes of silence at the start whilst they write down the title, learning objective etc. With groups in which you have a good relationship, allow students to put their head in their hands or show a slow moving picture slideshow (ideally relating to the lesson).
- Give clear guidelines: “I expect you to have produced at least three lines by ten past ten; I will be asking you then to share these with your writing partner.” Present as though you assume they will complete it, not as a request to complete it.
- Give regular updates on time remaining for tasks to ensure pace. Otherwise the student is likely to ‘drift off’. A digital clock / watch will work more effectively than a standard clock as there is a high prevalence of students with concentration difficulties not being able to consistently tell the time on a standard clock.

Impulsivity

- Try to seat the student well away from areas other students need to walk through. Also try to limit opportunity for them to ‘roam’ around the classroom (such as handing out books etc.)

- Use visual prompts to remind students about the type of learning taking place. i.e. have a picture of a student working on their own for 'quiet working' tasks and a picture of students with their hands up for class discussion tasks.
- During longer tasks and longer periods of teacher-talk / Q&A, work in a 'movement break' with a clear parameter – i.e. give them a specific errand such as asking them to fetch stationery from next door (sometimes they will request this as a way of self-managing their restlessness).
- Establish a quiet place where the student can go to work should they become overly excited or agitated.
- Students will often engage in disruptive behaviour when they find a task too difficult and become off-task, particularly during extended writing activities. Provide support in the form of writing frames, word mats and prompts such as a display board with ideas for 'Five things to do if you are stuck'.
- To reduce 'unstructured time' in which impulsive behaviour is likely to occur, try to have a set of familiar task types that students are familiar with (such as highlighting key words in a text, word puzzles, number puzzles, cutting and sorting exercises, cloze procedure etc) which can be used at the start of lesson and at the end of lesson if there is time remaining – and possibly as a back-up should there be inappropriate behaviour and a student needs to work elsewhere.
- Aim for a ratio of three positive comments to one negative and teach student how to reward themselves: 'You managed to concentrate on your work very well just then; give yourself a pat on the back'.
- With a student who has fallen into a pattern of disruptive behaviour, try to work on step-by-step change by setting a clear behaviour target for two weeks (such as "put our hands up when we want to speak") and offering tangible rewards for meeting it. Then move to another target, and so on.
- Actively teach/use clear classroom routines, e.g. have all students hold an object when it is their turn to talk.
- Display classroom rules and routines for student to refer to. Illustrate them visually - for example, use a traffic-light system to indicate whether students can talk or not, or symbols for different noise levels (partner voices, group voices, classroom voice, outside voices).
- Remind the student of a rule, rather than telling them off - "N, our rule is we put up our hand to answer". Or make a point of praising a student who is keeping the rule- "A, I like the way you put your hand up when you knew the answer".
- When correcting unacceptable behaviour, say what you want him or her to do, rather than what you don't –'N., I want you to keep your hands on the table.' instead of 'N, stop bothering P'.
- Use language that labels the behaviour but not the student – i.e. "N, turn your volume down please." rather than "N, you are really noisy at the moment." Most

students who present with high-impulsivity will tend to switch off or respond with anger if they perceive they are being 'picked on' or "got at yet again".

- Use the language of choice, reminding students of the consequences of the various behavioural choices open to them.
- Some impulsive behaviour can be driven by the habit of trying to gain adult and peer attention. One way to counter this is tactically ignore such behaviour and praise good behaviour. A further strategy, if the disruption is escalating, is to isolate the student temporarily and deny them the attention of others – this, when managed carefully, can act as a deterrent for inappropriate attention-seeking.

Dyspraxia

Definition: as a condition affecting development and skills. Students with dyspraxia will have difficulties in the areas of fine motor skills, spatial and sometimes visual-perceptual and visual-sequencing difficulties. They are often described as clumsy and poorly co-ordinated.

In written work they may have:

- Poor handwriting - writing can be laborious and immature
- Slow speed of writing - difficulties copying things down
- Poor written presentation – poor perception of the margin/ above and below the line
- Difficulties organising their written work and planning essays etc
- Difficulties with drawing (shapes/ objects etc)

IDEAS FOR THE CLASSROOM

GENERAL HANDLING

- Help the child identify steps needed to begin and accomplish the task. Have the child repeat directions and, if possible, write down the steps (or write them down for him/her)
- For older children rehearse: Goal/ Plan/Do/ Check
- Ask the child questions of what he/she is going to do and how he/she is going to do it when he/she is within an environment that he/she needs to do something with.
- Encourage the child to verbalise what he/she is doing while carrying out the activities.
- Give a short assignment so that the child can feel instant success in completing a task. Document the length of time a child can focus on one task and structure the assignment so that it can be completed in that length of time.
- Set up a system for checking off steps as they are accomplished.

- Give one direction at a time. After one action is successfully completed, add another direction.
- Help the child physically move through the action.
- Minimising visual distractions. Check for clutter in classroom environment and on desks.
- Review how to play the game before actually playing it. Demonstrate verbally as well as visually.
- Marking the boundaries of the game. For example, rope, string, masking -tape or chalks can be used to mark a game circle or start and finish lines.
- Stopping action between turns in order to get everyone's attention and therefore regain control.
- Scheduling and implementing frequent (daily) motor time so that students become familiar with behavioural expectations during motor activities.
- Rehearse what the child has learnt on a regular basis.

HANDWRITING

- Multi-sensory handwriting programme
- Developmental progress of handwriting
- Handwriting practice to music to improve rhythm and timing
- Verbalising letter formations
- Additional spatial training and visual spatial cuing to over learn the spatial concepts of writing
- Components of handwriting to be broken down into arm shift, wrist shift, finger manipulation
- Use guidelines on paper or quadrille paper (www.sparklebox.com)
- Large scale lines and tactile paper
- Use bigger squares for maths
- Use a vertical/sloping surface so up and down have meaning, and increase of proprioceptive feedback
- Use different types of pens and pencils. Allow child pen/pencil of their choice. Roller pens are better than fountain pens.
- Reduce amount of writing as eyes also having to check on hand movements as proprioceptive memory is often unreliable e.g. pre-pared sheets, multiple choice papers, less examples, allow short answers, notes, essay plans
- Mind Maps, Thinking Maps and short hand for taking notes.
- Photocopy books and highlight information rather than writing long hand
- Scanner pens for highlighting and downloading

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES FOR RECORDING WORK

- Lesson notes taken by LSAs/LSPs or summary notes prepared in advance by the teacher

- Access to word processing facilities and explicit teaching of touch typing
- Use a Dictaphone for drafts of project work, preparation of ideas for written assignments etc
- Drawing diagrams of main ideas in a text
- Provision of the outlines of diagrams, apparatus drawings, maps etc so the student only has to label the relevant parts or annotate the diagrams

ALTERNATIVES TO READING

- Large print text
- Use of audio tapes of set books
- Recording of written texts by support staff/parents
- Presentation of written material in diagrammatic form for those students who can interpret this

Coordination Difficulties

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of drawing activities: mind mapping , flow charts, gapped handouts , photocopied transcripts of notes, pre-prepared post-its with information the student can pick up and place on the page, print-off of IWB page for student to annotate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design worksheets so that the layout is uncluttered. Use buff or cream paper, large print (12-14 point) and a clear font such as Arial. Set information out in panels. Signpost sections with key words, symbols and pictures. Put important information in bold or colour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check seating – desktop should be at elbow height, student should be able to sit right back in their chair with knees bending back at right angles and feet flat on the floor. Put box or large book under feet if necessary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use aids supplied – portable writing slope, clipboards to attach paper to, non-slip mats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a reminder handwriting alphabet and numeral formation guide at top of desk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use larger-lined book or paper , columns or boxes to place numbers in, squared paper
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the student with study packs – everything they need for each subject/lesson in a separate folder, plus pack of • highlighter pens, post-it notes, a line tracker for following text, various sized card ‘windows’ to limit vision to one area of page, sticky labels to use to correct or conceal

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach student strategies to improve organisation, such as diaries, workplans, checklists of equipment they have to bring to school each day
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help student follow text on board or IWB by writing/highlighting alternate lines in different colours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enlarge pages from textbooks, cut out the particular exercise needed and then mount it on a separate page.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the student needs to work through a series of questions, help them keep their place by using a paper clip or blob of blu-tack to indicate which question they are on
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pair student with a more co-ordinated study buddy for work involving fine motor skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide pre-prepared formats (diagrams, charts and graphs) on which student can record information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach student to talk themselves through visual and spatial tasks – e.g. learn verbal model for letter formation('b - start at top, down, up, round') down', translate maths calculations into verbal problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seat student away from distractions with plenty of space each side of them – student should have writing arm on the outside edge of shared table. Student should be able to see the teacher without turning their body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid criticism if student looks untidy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose resources that don't require manipulation (e.g. number line rather than counters in maths)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colour code spatially confusable items e.g. x sign in one colour, + sign in another
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow ample rest periods as concentration and motor effort is demanding and student is easily fatigued
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write down homework for student or give it on a sheet or pre-printed sticky label they can put in their book. Accept homework written down by parents

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT BASIC NUMERACY DIFFICULTIES (INC. DYSCALCULIA -TYPE TENDENCIES)

1. Link maths to relevant and practical contexts – shopping, eating out etc.
2. Use a 'scaffolding' approach – avoid rushing the student through a task. Break it down into steps. Provide time for recap & consolidation at each stage and revisit the basic skills often.
3. Allow students as much thinking time as they need to complete a task or calculation, including oral / mental work. Avoid putting them on the spot by asking a question in front on an audience of peers.
4. Minimise the amount of information that students have to hold in their mind at any one time. For example, if they are performing long division problems, they should write down every step including carrying numbers. When solving word problems, they should always have a scrap piece of paper handy and write down the steps in their calculations. This will help prevent them from losing their place and forgetting what they are doing.
5. Use a variety of visual and kinaesthetic resources – objects, images and models. Allow the students to manipulate the resources.
6. Use a variety of methods and try to adapt teaching to the student's natural way of working out rather than simply imposing the method you have learnt / use frequently etc.
7. Provide a list of maths symbols – as you would with punctuation – to remind students.
8. Provide number squares and prepared formats for recording calculations / answers – with shaded alternate rows.
9. Provide help/cue cards for different operations – colour code for categories i.e. blue for subtraction, red for addition. Vary the vocabulary, for example, colour code blue 'minus', take away' etc.
10. Use small numbers when introducing new concepts. Gradually work up to higher numbers via short, small step tasks.
11. Take time to explain /recap on maths vocabulary. Check for understanding.
12. Play games with students to teach the points you want the students to learn.
13. Ask lots of questions, rephrasing your sentences and varying your vocabulary.
14. Encourage students to talk about what they are doing and why.
15. Establish a routine of 'estimate – calculate – check'.

GENERAL TEACHING APPROACHES

Visual approaches, such as encouraging the student to draw diagrams, pictures, or use a physical object, can help the student visualise numbers more easily. The key is to teach the student how to conceptualize a real-life situation and associate it to the numerical problem, in turn, making it mentally "real" to them. The student can pick a favourite theme or idea, associate numbers to these concepts and apply it to a drawing. Or a student can arrange objects that represent the numbers and create calculations with them; the abacus was once used for this same strategy.

Organisation is a key concept when developing classroom strategies for students with persistent numeracy difficulties. For instance, horizontal mathematical calculations may be difficult for a student, because the sequence of numbers are calculated vertically from top to bottom, whereas reading sentences are done horizontally, from left to right. It may help a student if math problems were written in a linear sequence. Another strategy is for the students to perform mathematical problems on graph paper, in order to keep the numbers in the correct sequences. Confusion can create a mental shut down in a student who has persistent difficulties with Maths, and keeping an organised and clutter free maths worksheet or homework paper, can help the student avoid these pitfalls. Often when problems are written too closely together, the student may become confused and frustrated.

Mnemonics are strategies normally used as a memory aide in spelling, like the mnemonic, "i before e, except after c; however, a student can also use mnemonics to memorize numbers and number sequences. By relating numbers to words, for example, the student can associate the number 1 with the letters t or d, because they each are created by using one down stroke, the student can create a number-word picture. With letter number association, students can create stories, tunes, or sayings to memorize number tables. An example would be: $2+2=4$, Nancy and Nelly like Rod. The number 2 is associated with the letter n, because it is created using two strokes, and the number 4 represents the letter r, because the word "four" ends in an r.

Dyslexia: DIFFICULTIES IN LITERACY

General

- Keep instructions to one or two parts only. Chunk sequences of instructions – i.e. deliver one at a time vocally, print them one at a time on separate cards, model in numbered steps etc.
- Allow 1-2 minutes 'take up time' when giving instructions – this will allow the student to process fully what is required of them.

- Try teaching an active listening strategy – “Stop, Look and Listen” - every time the teacher speaks. By practising responding in this way students with dyslexic tendencies may find that they recall and understand more. Remember however, that they will not be able to take notes at the same time as listening.
- Avoid moving around too much when giving spoken instruction / information. Avoid standing in a place surrounded by ‘clutter’ such as shelving, posters, storage units etc. A classroom where students shout out or there is low-level noise will also act as ‘clutter’.
- Always take time to model tasks and provide an example of the ‘finished product’ as a way of giving instructions without relying on words.
- Ask the student to repeat back instructions to you in their own words – establish a “tell me, show me” routine.
- Respond supportively when a student forgets routines – such as bringing a pen and pencil, books, PE kit, arriving at the right lesson at the right time etc. Try to use strategies such as checklists, reminder notes, visual timetables etc. to support the student. Students with dyslexic tendencies will forget obvious detail, remembering one day and not the next.
- Avoid sudden changes in routine without informing them beforehand. If there is a planned classroom change (such as students working in the library), ask a member of staff or student to check at the previous classroom to make sure they haven’t forgotten.
- Write down homework instructions for them in numbered steps – to make this quicker and more discreet, write it on a post-it note and give it to them during the lesson (rather than at the end) so they can clarify what’s required / ask any questions.
- Try to sit students near motivated, encouraging peers. Students with dyslexic tendencies typically find the school day stressful and are at risk of becoming disengaged and gravitating towards other disengaged students.
- Don’t expect them to learn strings of facts automatically, e.g. multiplication tables, a timeline of dates (including days of the week, months of the year), French vocab lists etc.
- If the student has good vocabulary / speaking & listening skills, use classroom discussion, role-play, group work etc. as opportunities to build their self-esteem.
- Ensure that learning in every lesson is as multi-sensory as possible – auditory, visual, kinaesthetic. Students with dyslexic tendencies typically prefer ‘seeing’, ‘feeling’, ‘discussing’ and ‘doing’ rather than ‘listening’, ‘reading’ and ‘writing’.

Reading

- Avoid embarrassing dyslexic students by asking them to read aloud. If they volunteer, devise a system of support such as tapping the desk / giving a hand sign whenever they need support with a word.
- Go that extra mile to praise students with dyslexic tendencies when they read out loud (but continue to be discreet) – ring their parents, provide an individual reward, speak to them 1-1 about their achievements etc.
- If you frequently use your smartboard / whiteboard to present written information, remove distracting ‘clutter’ from around it such as shelving, posters, storage units etc.
- Use a pastel coloured background on your smartboard and blue, green and red pens (rather than black) on your whiteboard to reduce stark contrasts and aid visual processing.
- Use font-types that resemble the handwritten alphabet as closely as possible - Courier New for older students and Comic Sans for younger students. Also, use size 14 fonts and 1.5 line spacing.
- Support reading by discreetly pairing them up with a ‘reading buddy’, by asking other students to read the text to the class or by discreetly assigning support staff to assist them.
- Break down extended reading by numbering paragraphs / lines.
- Encourage the student to ‘line track’ with a ruler. Provide this as advice to the whole class so as to be discreet.

Writing

- Always look for alternatives to extended writing – PowerPoint presentations, making posters, making a picture gallery, oral presentations, dramatic reconstructions / role-play, mind maps, matching labels to pictures/diagrams/maps
- Scaffold writing with writing frames, VCOP grids, cloze procedure, word lists etc.
- Allow extra time for written tasks to be completed. Focus feedback on ideas content rather than on time spent, neatness, spelling etc.
- Minimise copying from the board. Provide pre-prepared information for them to have on their desks / stick in their books.
- When copying from the board is necessary, number or colour-mark the lines so they can keep track. To reduce the amount needed to be copied from the board, use a different colour for key parts then discreetly instruct them to “focus on the green” etc.
- Pair them up with other students during writing tasks. They will often have good ideas but poor handwriting and spelling so will work well with a student who can write fluently and spell but struggles with imagination / creativity.
- Use classroom displays to help with writing – display banks of sentence starters, connecting words, punctuation symbols etc.

- Constantly encourage students to practise spelling strategies – 1) breaking words down into syllables and/or 2) look, write, cover, check – reinforce this every time he/she asks for a spelling. Praise when he/she spells words correctly.

Hearing impaired

- Identify which side, if they have one, is the student's strongest and then seat appropriately. i.e. a student with hearing loss in their left ear should be seated with their right ear nearer the source of the sound.
- Provide as much opportunity for the students to lip-read, read body language, see hand gestures etc. Seat student nearer to the front although do not insist on the front row as this can stigmatise them. Avoid walking around during speaking & listening.
- Speak clearly, naturally and at a normal rate – shouting or exaggerated 'mouthing' distorts normal lip patterns.
- Ensure when some is speaking that the light is on their face and not behind. i.e. make sure the whiteboard and window are not directly behind you.
- When speaking, extend natural pauses to provide the student with a short break as lip-reading increases the time and energy required to process information and can be tiring for the student.
- When other students contribute, ensure that they speak one at a time. Paraphrase their contributions back to the class.
- Minimise background noise e.g. noisy heater, buzzing light. Make other students aware of need for a quiet working environment – discreetly as part of a whole class approach.
- Be aware of the fatigue and frustration a student may experience because of the amount of effort they have to put in to listening.
- Use short simple instructions. Give one at a time and check for understanding. Repeating instructions first in same words, but then if these are not understood substitute different words.
- Support oral presentations/explanations with charts, diagrams, pictures, real objects or mime. Write topics or headings on the board as you introduce them.
- Cue the student in to a change of topic – say 'now we are going to look at...' – discreetly as part of a whole-group approach.
- Agree private signal that student can use to show you when they have not understood.
- Try to use video with subtitles; if not available, allow student to borrow video material after lesson to view it again or direct them to an appropriate website/YouTube clip. Don't ask student to make notes while watching

- Ensure that homework instructions are written on the board or in the student's planner (write on a post-stick beforehand and give it to them discreetly) as well as given verbally.

Literacy

- Students with Hearing Impairment typically have difficulties with literacy. Be aware that independent writing and understanding of written vocabulary will reflect the student's spoken language levels which may be delayed.
- Support writing with frames and lists of vocabulary to choose from.
- Try to use a range of ways of recording and assessing so that progress is not limited by the student's ability to write full, grammatically correct English sentences.
- Put up a list of key vocabulary for a particular topic or lesson and teach the meaning of each word – ideally as part of a whole-group approach.

1-1 Conversation

- During discreet 1-1 conversation, accept student's spoken utterances but rephrase and give them back in a grammatically correct version.
- Use the student's name before asking a direct question or giving a direct instruction. Actively include the students in speaking and listening activities.
- When in conversation with the student, if they mishear something, patiently repeat again – a frustration reported by many students with hearing impairment is being told "it doesn't matter" when they ask for clarification.

Visually impaired

- Hand in your resources to reprographics and ask for them to be enlarged by 15% on A4 paper (equivalent to point 18 font size) as soon as you can, some things can be adapted quickly, some take a really long time such as text books which need to go to our VI LA consultant.
- Seat students in the middle at the front (first or second row), this helps them to use their hearing to listen to what you are saying.
- Sit the student with VI next to peers they can work well with - they will need to ask questions from time to time, a helpful partner is worth their weight in gold.
- Try to have a quiet working environment - students with VI rely heavily on their hearing to learn.
- Speak clearly with extended natural pauses - try to discreetly face the student when you speak.
- Say the student's name before asking a direct question or giving a direct instruction and indicate who is talking in a class discussion.

- Avoid student having to look directly into a light source-do not sit or stand with the light behind you.
- Avoid clutter or busy displays around the whiteboard area – students with VI need a single distinct point to focus on.
- Keep your room clutter free - everyone is embarrassed if they trip up in front of others, but especially students with a visual impairment.
- Be aware that some students with VI don't know what other students are doing around them. Explain what is happening, be aware that no hand up might be embarrassment, not lack of knowledge.
- Use non-glossy, non-reflective paper and clear contrasting fonts / colours. Use photocopies of masters not of faint blurred versions.
- Try to make PowerPoint with a dark background and light writing. The greater the contrast the better. Use a large, plain font (this is much better for most students).
- Avoid PowerPoint or videos which contain lots of animation, play lots of loud music and move quickly between slides (they're too quick to see or explain).
- Provide commentary to replace/supplement information from pictures, questions, facial expressions – “This is a model of a skull, at the front you can see the jaw bone...” and so on.
- Use kinaesthetic experience to replace/supplement auditory and visual input (for example, if class is watching sugar cubes dissolve in a beaker, student can put their hand in beaker and feel it dissolve). This will benefit all students.
- Use larger-lined paper, columns or boxes to place numbers in, squared paper. Have student use dark pen instead of pencil.
- Ensure student uses aids supplied – such as hand held and portable video magnifiers, book stands, raised slopes etc.
- Minimise extensive handwritten recording – use ICT, bullet points, mind mapping, flow charts, gapped handouts, LSA or trusted peer acting as scribe, and enlarged printout of IWB page for student to annotate.
- Use tactile indicators- blu-tack, rulers, paper clips, folded out post-sticks etc. to help student find information in a book, locate where they need to be on page, keep track of which question they are on in a series.
- Allow extra time to complete tasks and be aware of the fatigue the student may experience because of the amount of effort they have to put into learning. Bear in mind that a student with VI will complete, on average 1/3 to 1/2 of the work that the others have done.
- Give a time check somewhere in the lesson – VI students will often struggle to keep track of time without a specialist watch.
- Ensure homework instructions are written down correctly. Organise a homework buddy they can ring if they have forgotten what to do ('phone a friend').

Speech, Language and Communication Needs

Much can be achieved in the classroom to support children and young people with SLCN, including some who may not have been identified.

It's important for teachers to realise that pupils categorised as 'inattentive', ADHD, disruptive or 'just not interested' may actually be struggling to understand what is being said to them. By making teachers and TAs aware of these issues, and reminding them of some straightforward approaches, you can gradually improve speaking and listening skills (and often behaviour) across the board.

Be aware of how staff speak and listen

'Fanks for vat', 'they was late again', 'must of' instead of 'must have', etc. – incorrect pronunciation and grammar leads to additional confusion for children who are already struggling to understand and get things right.

It's also important to recognise that children with SLCN might not understand non-literal language and sarcasm. 'I think you've turned a corner today', which I heard recently from a teacher pleased with a child's progress, actually meant nothing to the child at all.

In terms of listening, teachers and TAs should be offering good models of this all the time: listening carefully when a child speaks to them, asking questions to ensure they understand the child's meaning, and listening to each other (teacher to TA and vice versa) in a courteous way.

Where members of staff are failing to provide good models of speaking and listening, the issue must be addressed. You can refer to the [Teachers' standards](#); be sensitive, humorous and non-judgemental; speak to the whole staff rather than single out individuals; plan a focus week.

However you approach the issue, stress the importance of children hearing and being able to use 'standard English'.

Some practical tips

The classroom environment

- Seat pupils with SLCN away from distractions and near to you so that they can see your face clearly when you speak.
- Use visual back-up as much as possible (facial expression and gesture, visual timetables, symbols, visual timers); show examples of completed work; use video clips to demonstrate processes.
- Consider introducing a signing system, such as Makaton.
- Establish class routines and explain carefully when there are changes
- Praise and reward good speaking and listening; focus on these skills at particular times, with clear explanations of 'what I'm looking/listening for' (WILF). Use good examples of speaking to reinforce good communication: 'Jacob, you spoke really clearly and we could all hear what you said. Well done.'

- Establish turn-taking rules, perhaps using a toy or bean bag to pass around the class (only the person holding the object can speak).
- Allow time for pupils to answer. For example, 'I'm going to ask a question that I want you all to think about carefully. We'll take a minute (more or less as appropriate) to think about this, then I'll choose someone to answer.' On choosing someone, say their name first: 'Eva, can you tell us ...?' This alerts the pupil in good time so that they can be ready to respond.
- Establish a system for asking for help, such as a special card for the child to display if they don't understand.
- Encourage pupils to ask each other for help and explanation when they don't understand something – and praise this when you see it happening.

Differentiation strategies

Break down tasks and instructions into manageable 'chunks', perhaps with step-by-step symbol or picture cards to back up short, clear verbal explanations. This is something that a TA can be tasked with, but exactly how to do it should be carefully planned.

Discourage LSAs from accidentally talking over you. This is distracting for other children (who aren't sure which adult to listen to) and sends a message to the child with SLCN that they don't need to listen to the teacher as their 'helper' is there to repeat and simplify what has been said. Instead, encourage the child to listen carefully along with everyone else at first, before the LSA checks their understanding and then uses appropriate prompts and visual aids if needed.

Approaches to consider with a small group

These might include:

- explanation of unfamiliar words, metaphors, etc and practice in using a dictionary and thesaurus
- asking pupils to explain what they have read/learned ('how' and 'why' questions) and what they have to do; checking their understanding and perhaps noting down simple written instructions as an aide-memoire
- helping them to organise their thoughts and plan tasks (making sure that the pupils do most of the thinking and talking)
- rehearsing verbal responses for the plenary, or allowing a pupil to speak in a less-intimidating small group and then relaying what the individual said to the larger class
- giving corrective feedback, so providing a good model of language
- using role-play to encourage speaking and develop confidence. Being 'in role' often empowers pupils to be more extrovert; consider using a microphone or telephone (real or 'play')
- using technology to motivate and support learners, e.g. Clicker 6 (Crick Software) to make a picture book and record the child's voice telling the 'story'.

Most importantly, allow the child with SLCN enough time to sequence and compose their thoughts in an unhurried and unpressured way, with lots of praise for the effort made.

SUPPORTING SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL NEEDS (linked to attachment theory)

Attention

- Sit the student nearer to the teacher / support staff in the classroom.
- Sit the student nearer to chatty but positive, generally settled peers.
- 'Catch the student being good' – approach the student at regular intervals and praise for being settled, for completing a task etc.
- Challenge minor unacceptable behaviour through discrete hand signals – i.e. make eye contact, point to your tie if theirs is untied, then give a thumbs up before walking away.
- Tactically ignore some minor behaviour issues – for a period of time, focus your attention only on the most disruptive behaviour.

Protection

- Start off the lesson with an easier / familiar task to build confidence before building to more challenging tasks.
- List the activities for the lesson on the board at the start of each lesson – talk them through with the whole class.
- Praise and reward all attempts at a task – place onus on trying rather than completing. Use Growth Mindset – “We’re not there yet!” to motivate
- Give clear expectations and indications of support, “I am looking for three sentences in ten minutes – I’ll be back to help you in five.”
- Provide supports that can be readily accessed when needed – writing frames, word maps, displays such as “Five things to do when I’m stuck.”

Affiliation

- Welcome the student personally at the start of each lesson – “Hello Mohammed, it’s good to see you...”
- When giving instructions or advice, always start by using their first name, “Denis, I would like you to...”
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour by rejecting the behaviour not the student – “This is not the behaviour I would expect from someone as smart as you.”
- Reduce tension over success and failure by inviting them to play light-hearted competitive games during break / lunch / after-school club.
- Take time to tell the student they are liked and that what happens to them matters to the school – “There is much to like about you, and we want you to succeed in school.”

Control

- Challenge unacceptable behaviour by using the language of choice – “If you choose to continue to behave this way, it will be a detention. Or you could choose to get back on-track. It’s your decision.”
- Avoid being caught up in confrontation about trivial issues. Provide a short instruction with “thank you” at the end and then walk away. Return after a few minutes ‘take up time’ and repeat the instruction.
- If the student follows your instruction but huffs and puffs, mumbles, rolls their eyes etc. - tactically ignore this ‘secondary behaviour’ and thank them for following the instruction.
- If the student starts to raise their voice whilst in conversation with you, actively keep your voice quiet and calm.
- Avoid using body language relating to aggressive control – pointing downwards, forcing constant eye contact, shouting etc.
- Encourage the student to take on class responsibilities – handing out the books, writing on the board. Praise their usefulness.
- Where possible, ask the student to help a peer with their work. Then praise both for their efforts together.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour by using the language of agreement and fairness for all – “The agreement we have in this class is that we all remain quiet and focused on our work, so that each of us has a chance to do our best.”
- When issuing sanctions, explain to the student what you are doing and why you are doing it.
- Where necessary, call parent/s to explain sanctions in advance of them being implemented. When there is improvement, call with positive news.
- Model fairness by being comfortable about admitting and correcting a mistake if a student is wrongly blamed for an issue.
- Where there are clear issues of bullying, ensure that it is followed up. Take time to explain to the victim what you are doing about it. If appropriate, also explain to the class.
- Where there are incidents of ‘tit-for-tat’ conflict between students, organise a restorative meeting / conversation where the message is, “It doesn’t matter who started it, it will lead to more upset and anger so we need to stop now and agree to move on.”
- During detentions, focus on restorative tasks – tasks presented as ‘putting something back into the class’ – such as sharpening pencils, tidying the chairs, cleaning the whiteboard.

FIVE WAYS TO IDENTIFY ATTACHMENT DIFFICULTIES FOR CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

Identifying attachment difficulties in a young person can be incredibly difficult due to the complicated nature of this condition, yet it can affect a significant number of young people who may have experienced early childhood trauma, neglect or inconsistent care. Building trusting relationships may take time, but once you achieve this, the rewards can be endless - not just for them but for you too!

- A lack of empathy - they really do not understand how it feels for others, show an inability to take responsibility for their actions. Empathy is something that starts to develop early in life through mirroring. If babies haven't been able to work together with parents to understand that they have an impact on the world and that there is something outside of themselves – then they do not develop empathy.
- Lack of self-regulation - the inability to control impulses, change behaviour if needed and soothe own emotions. We learn self-regulation early in life through being co-regulated by our parents.
- When a child hasn't experienced this the ability to self-regulate isn't there. In the classroom you see them acting impulsively with others, they react quickly, seem to have no control over their emotions, they can dysregulate very quickly and then it takes a long time to bring them down.
- Shame based behaviour - the belief at the core of their being that THEY are bad. Due to early experiences many children believe that THEY are bad - they don't deserve to be treated well - they feel useless, unworthy and unlovable. In the classroom many of the behaviours you see will be shame based; lying, blaming others, minimising their actions, rage, running away, hiding, or over reaction to criticism. All these behaviours indicate a child who is riddled with shame.
- Retention and memory issues - the inability to remember what's already been learnt and to be able to add new learning. Many children find certain aspects of learning difficult. For some it's Maths, others it might be English or the Sciences. They seem to learn something one day and then by the next day it's gone. You have to be in the right space in your brain in order to learn new things. As with hypervigilance for children whose brains were developing when they were in a chaotic, frightening environment where their needs were not met, their brains are active in the reptilian part of the brain - all they are concerned about is survival. In order to learn you need to be in the frontal cortex part of your brain. The reptilian and frontal cortex parts of the brain cannot be active at the same time. This means that a child who's scared and anxious at school will be in the reptilian part of the brain and therefore not able to access the thinking part of the brain.

STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DIFFICULTIES (further support)

Modelling: The key strategy for managing minor conflict within the classroom is for the teacher to model positive conflict resolution behaviour. If a teacher uses sarcasm, overuses shouting, always responds punitively to minor infringements, holds a grievance over a number of lessons etc then the students will view this as the 'rules of engagement' in the classroom and act accordingly.

Seating Arrangements: Carefully consider your seating arrangements. A U-shaped seating arrangement or group tables may foster positive group work but may also lead to negative interactions because they force students with emotional and social difficulties to sit looking directly at one another.

Safe Territories: Students with social difficulties are often resistant to change and become aggressive in response to uncertainty. They will often prefer a set seat and table (a 'territory') in the classroom. Avoid frequent, abrupt changes in seating plans.

Team Spirit: Encourage students to take on responsibilities for the running and upkeep of the classroom – such as taking the register, handing out and taking in books, handing out writing equipment, writing the date on the board etc, praising each other's work. Always encourage and reward students who help another student.

Use of Language: Use constructive language when advising students on their interactions with one another, "Please speak politely to each other." rather than "Don't call each other names." For some students with concentration and receptive language difficulties, using the negative means they automatically focus on the negative – and then tend to act impulsively on this thought.

Red Lines Read the 'emotional climate' of social interactions – classroom humour and light-hearted banter will go a long way in helping relax the students and make for a better learning environment, but left unchecked it can escalate quickly as students with social difficulties will often take jokes too far. Discuss what the 'red lines' are with students and consistently remind them.

Triggers Try to spot 'hidden' triggers amongst the students who regularly engage in conflict – especially discreet comments (often seemingly harmless single words), leading questions, sly nudges and throwing etc that some students will use to provoke confrontation whilst avoiding unwanted teacher attention / classroom sanctions. If possible, ask a colleague to come and 'help out' in a lesson with the aim of spotting these triggers and those students involved.

Soap Opera Switch Off: Try to distinguish between real anger and acted anger. Some students will deliberately over-react as a way of diverting attention from the work, gain adult attention and to try to 'score points' against a student they are in conflict with. This may not be something they think through consciously but will habitually resort to. In these

situations, it is crucial not to get caught up in the drama and to respond quickly, calmly and matter-of-factly in addressing the issue - then switching straight back to discussing learning.

Solution-Focused: If students are in constant conflict, remove either individually or together from the classroom audience to discuss the issue. Move away from the typical 'who started it' discussion and direct them towards 'moving on'. Students with social difficulties are likely to have a deeply embedded view that the only way of ending a conflict is by 'winning' the argument and will need repeatedly coaching in 'letting go'.

Slow Motion Repeats: Some students fall into a habit of 'quick responding' – they will misread situations and rapidly respond defensively / aggressively. On talking through a conflict, try to break it down into steps to raise their awareness of how the conflict emerged. Where appropriate, it can be useful to have another adult sit in and explain what happened as a 'neutral'. It is important during this process, that the language 'taking responsibility' and 'putting things right' is focused upon rather than 'blame' and 'punishment'.

Action Replays: Where you have trust with a student and they are receptive to your advice, it can be useful to repeat verbatim the insults they have used in a matter-of-fact way (this takes away the taboo / perceived power of such insults) and even 'play act' their responses. This can prove a very effective tool in raising self-awareness. In extreme situations, some special schools rig up a temporary CCTV camera/web cam or staff record on ipads to playback behaviour to students involved in constant conflict.

Diversion Tactics: Following conflict, ask the student/s involved either going with another member of staff to do a job for 5 – 10 mins or if you can trust them, running an errand. This will help provide 'cool off' time and distract their attention from the previous issue.

Bully Spotting: If there is repeated conflict between particular students or if there is a complaint made, then it is important to follow it up with an investigation - with support from pastoral staff. Sometimes students may claim that a conflict is a two-way argument when in fact it is being instigated and perpetuated by them as the more dominant, aggressive side.

Time Out: Where there are repeated issues of conflict, a protocol – organised in cooperation with dept. colleagues or pastoral staff – may be required to allow particularly volatile students to take limited 'cool off' time in another classroom or office area.

EAL Students : 10 EAL ESSENTIALS

- Do I know who my EAL students are? Can I say/pronounce their names and make them feel accepted in the class?
- Have I seated/grouped the EAL students in the best possible way to support their learning?

- Do I move around the room to check that EAL students have understood and know what to do?
- Do I grade my questions to suit the different levels of the EAL students?
- Am I making the best possible use of the LSA/LSP?
- Do I support the students in recording key words from the lesson (glossary) and embedding them for future lessons?
- Do I give instructions clearly and simply so that EAL students know what to do next?
- Do I use visuals to enhance EAL student understanding? Visuals include images, gestures, drama and clear writing on the board.
- Have I effectively differentiated worksheets and handouts to make sure that EAL students can access them? Are there other aids to their learning available to them e.g. dictionaries, word mats etc?
- Do I first establish prior learning/understanding and then build on that so that EAL students have a context to help their understanding?

Seating Plans

Why spend time thinking through your seating plans? They help promote good behaviour and effort.

- Putting in place a seating plan right from the beginning of the academic year will help establish teacher authority from the start. Periodically re-arranging seating plans will also help maintain good behaviour and vary student interactions – so long as such changes are presented as a supportive measure rather than a punishment.
- Students are creatures of habit, and will try to sit in the same place with the same people – new seating plans will typically be met with some resistance during the first few lessons but if persisted with, will then become ‘the norm’. Seating plan changes can help build students’ resilience to change and vary their social experiences.
- Whereas some students are disruptive in lessons and seek attention inappropriately, there are some students who will withdraw and actively avoid attention. Seating plans can assist with ‘settling’ the more boisterous learners - and assist with ‘stirring’ more passive learners.

They help reduce barriers to learning...

- Well-thought out seating plans can make differentiated lessons easier to plan and deliver.
- Seating plans can play students to their strengths in terms of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles.
- A good seating plan can counter ‘distance-decay’ – where students sit towards the back and in turn are less likely to engage in learning and more likely to get involved in low-level disruption. This is often the ‘hiding place’ of less able learners.

- A good seating plan can counter 'overlooking' – where students who sit at the front tables (typically a mix of conscientious, competent learners and vulnerable, lower-ability learners) often fall beyond the teacher's typical line of sight - and support.
- Thinking through seating arrangements for students with additional needs / SEN (often by referring to their One Page Profiles on SIMs) will help address difficulties with concentration, listening skills, literacy etc.