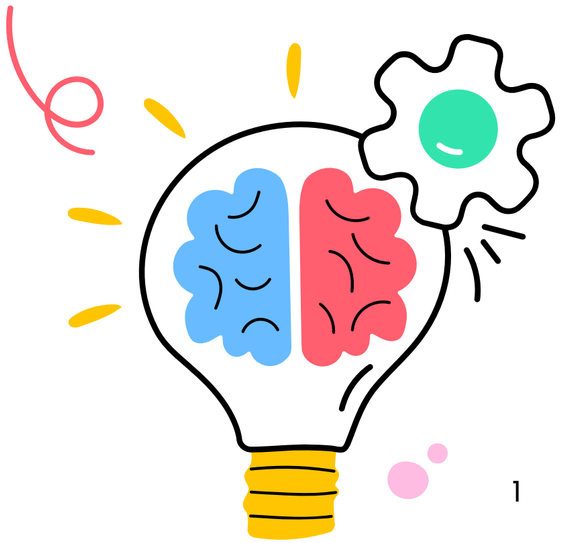
EVERY CHILD, EVERY SCHOOL
ORDINARILY AVAILABLE PROVISION

Guidance for Sutton secondary schools



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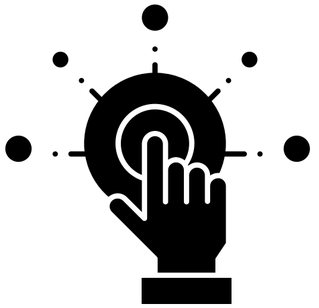

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Sutton's Vision and SEND Charter

We are collectively ambitious for our young people and young people. Together we want to provide them with the best chances to achieve their best outcomes in life, whatever their starting point, and to prepare them effectively for adulthood.

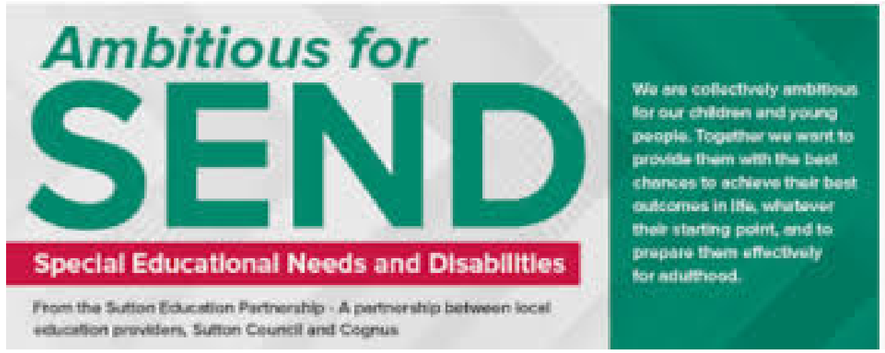
Our SEND Charter

The Sutton Charter provides a framework for shared values and attitudes across the local area. The charter has been consulted upon with schools, services, parents/carers and representative parent/carer organisations. The Charter will be used as one of the benchmarks to measure the success of the local SEND offer, gathering feedback against the areas shown below and reporting this to the relevant overseeing bodies.

Our SEND Charter Principles are that we:

- Welcome and Care
- Value and Include
- Communicate
- Work in Partnership, developing and nurturing each of these to build
- Trust

Read more about each principle here.



Every child, every school

Our Vision: Excellence and Equity for ALL

At the heart of every school in Sutton is a commitment to creating a truly inclusive environment. We aim for every young person, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), to feel that they belong, are valued and respected, and empowered to reach their full potential.

This is in line with the aspirations outlined in the London Inclusion Charter. Every young person Every School embraces that Charter's aims to embed diversity and equity, develop personal attributes of adaptability and active citizenship as well as develop the widest sense of achievement for young people.

The following principles and provision for every young person and every school, have been identified in collaboration with senior leaders from the London Borough of Sutton and Cognus and headteachers across Sutton schools.

In Sutton, we strive to remove barriers to achievement and participation, so that all pupils have equal opportunities to thrive and can have equity of access. It is paramount to remember that each young person/young person's strengths and needs are unique to them. Any support or provision should be provided according to the needs of the individual.

- **Quality First teaching for all is good teaching for pupils with SEND:** For all learners, including those with SEND and additional needs, high-quality teaching based on evidence informed research, is the most impactful intervention they will receive during their time in education.
- **Young people should be able to attend their local school:** According to the Code of Practice (2015) there is an assumption of mainstream education for pupils with SEND and it is expected that Sutton schools will promote this for the majority of young people and young people.
- **Graduated Approach:** We utilise the SEND graduated approach (assess, plan, do, review) to build a holistic understanding of pupils' needs and provide targeted support. Only once the graduated response has been exhausted and there is strong evidence that a pupil requires support above what could be made ordinarily available should an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment be applied for.

- **Inclusivity and Equity:** Inclusivity and equity is at the core of our educational provision, embedding equity of opportunity and promoting progress and attainment for all pupils.
- **Respect and Value:** We foster warm, welcoming, safe and respectful environments where everyone feels included and valued, allowing us to promote equality and challenge discrimination.
- **Partnership with Parents and Carers :** We value the voice of parents and carers, are committed to working in partnership to ensure all views are considered on the best possible outcomes. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that parents and carers are aware of what is available for pupils at the SEN Support level. Schools will aim to instil confidence in parents and carers about the value of high quality teaching and universal/targeted provision within their schools.

- **Embracing Neurodiversity:** Our focus is on capitalising on individual strengths and interests, adapting our approach to support unique learning styles.We view neurodiversity, such as ASD and ADHD, as a valuable part of all our communities.
- **Preparation for adulthood from the earliest years**: We know all parents and carers wish for their young people to go on to become healthy, happy adults who make a positive contribution to society. Planning of teaching and additional provision is therefore focused on the development of independent learning and life skills from the Early Years in collaboration with parents/carers. This means that approaches which lead to over reliance on adults and limit the independence of young people are used in a limited way e.g. one to one support, support staff deployed to pupils rather than to deliver interventions.
- **Points of transition require planning and adjustment:** Support ahead of transitions should be planned well in advance. It would not be typical for schools to submit EHCNAs for pupils in Year 6, neither for secondary schools need to exclude pupils in Year 7 (unless in exceptional circumstances), but instead to maximise transitional support.
- **Sutton settings work together:** To share good practice and to support one another in an ongoing cycle of improvement working closely with leaders across LBS and Cognus.

Using this document

What is this guidance for?

This document has been created for SENCOs, teachers, support staff and professionals who work to support the learning and development of primary school aged young people and young people. There are separate versions available for Early Years settings and primary schools in recognition of the different ways support is provided across different phases of education and the different language and terminology that is used to describe support.

This document aims to set out ordinarily available provision that Sutton schools offer to ensure that there is a consistently strong offer for SEND pupils across all schools. With 'every young person, every school' as our core belief it is hoped that this guidance will further increase levels of inclusion in Sutton schools and enable more young people and young people to have their needs identified and met early from within mainstream settings. This guidance does not seek to set out a definitive list of all strategies and interventions which should be ordinarily available but to provide a wide range of examples which are currently on offer in Sutton schools.

How has this guidance been created?

This guidance has been co-produced by Sutton Headteachers, SENCOs and professionals from across education support services in Cognus and the London Borough of Sutton.

Glossary

ABCC – Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence Chart
ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder
BSF - Building Stronger Foundations. A programme run by Sutton Virtual School and Cognus Educational Psychology Service to promote the use of trauma-informed and relational approaches across schools.
CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. CAMHS assess and treat CYP with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.
CBT – Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
CPD – Continuing Professional Development
CYP – Child and/or young person
EBSA – Emotionally Based School Avoidance
EHCP – Education and Health Care Plan. An EHCP is a legal document describing a young person's needs, their expected outcomes, the provision required to achieve those outcomes and naming their educational placement.
ELSA – Emotional Literacy Support Assistant
EPS – Educational Psychology Service
EWS - Sutton Emotional Wellbeing Service. An in-school service of NHS and Cognus practitioners who support pupils, families and school staff with emotional well-being and mental health needs.
HI – Hearing Impaired/Deafness
LA – Local Authority
LO - Local Offer
NASEN – National Association of Special Educational Needs
PE – Physical Education
PECS – Picture Exchange Communication System
QTVI – Qualified Teacher of children or young people who are Visually Impaired
SEMH – Social Emotional and Mental Health
SENCO – Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SEND Support - Support put in place to remove barriers to learning for pupils with emerging or identified additional needs which impact learning.
SALT - Speech and Language Therapy
SLT – Senior Leadership Team
OT - Occupational Therapy
OAP - Ordinarily Available Provision
TA – Teaching Assistant
VI – Visually Impaired/Vision Impairment

Directory of Services

Attendance Service	Cognus' Attendance Support Team support education settings, children and young people, parents/carers to ensure attendance levels are maintained at appropriate levels.
Autism Service	The Cognus Autism Service is an education support service set up to support autistic young people, parents and carers of autistic young people, and professionals working with autistic young people.
Cognus Limited	Cognus is about education – we exist to support schools, families and children/young people to access, enjoy and thrive in educational settings in school and in the community.
Early Years	Cognus' Early Years team works closely with settings (pre-schools, nurseries, childminders and early years provision in schools) in the Early Years sector and promoting Early Years practice to ensure that all children benefit from high quality provision.
Educational Psychology	Educational Psychology is the practice of applying psychological theories and ideas to the difficulties that can arise for pupils, teachers, families and schools. EPs will use consultation to help deliver their services. This involves bringing psychology to discussions with adults and young people.
Education Wellbeing Service	The Education Wellbeing Service supports schools in Sutton to improve mental health & wellbeing. We do this by offering timely, evidenced based interventions with children, young people & parents who are beginning to have difficulties. We also offer workshops, training & consultations with schools.
Infinity Support	Infinity Support is a one-stop online platform where parents carers, young people and professionals can access a wealth of resources, guidance, and training on neurodiversity.
MetaSENse database	MetaSENse is a free, evidence-based online database and toolkit which provides evidence-based intervention strategies tailored to different types of SEND. It is designed to support local authorities, schools, and families in improving educational outcomes for children and young people aged 4-25.
Paving the Way	Cognus' Paving the Way service is made up of a multi-disciplinary team. The team provides support for children and young people with a range of difficulties, including social communication, attention and concentration, and anxiety.
School Inclusion	Cognus' School Inclusion service provides information, advice, and guidance to schools to support inclusive practice.
SENCO Cluster	SENCO Clusters were set up in Sutton in 2020/21 to provide support to Special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) and Schools in Sutton to meet the needs of young people who are resident in the Borough.
SIASS	Sutton SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SIASS) offers free, impartial, confidential support for parents and carers of children with SEND and 0-25 year olds with SEND in Sutton.
The SEND Local Offer	The SEND Local Offer is a place to find information and support for families with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
SEND Support Advisory Partnership (SSAP)	**SSAP** is a multi-agency group that provides advice, resources, and, where appropriate, additional funding to help schools meet pupils' SEND needs earlier and more effectively.
Sutton Virtual School	Cognus' Sutton Virtual School provides educational support for Children Looked After, Previously Looked After, children on formal kinship orders and children with a social worker to improve their educational outcomes.
Sutton School Nursing	The School Nursing team provides advice and support on the following: Children with additional needs and complex health needs Sleep Behaviour Child development Healthy lifestyles Eating concerns Toileting Alcohol, drugs and smoking Emotional and mental health issues Sexual health and relationships
Therapies	Cognus Therapies comprises of qualified Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and Senior Therapy Assistants. We are a large and diverse team with a wealth of knowledge and experience in supporting children and young people with additional needs.
Traveller Education	The Traveller Education Service encourages and supports improved access to educational opportunities amongst all Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families. We aim to raise awareness and understanding of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.
Vulnerable Pupils Panel (VPP)	The Vulnerable Pupils Panel (VPP), is a multi-agency partnership panel that meets monthly to discuss new requests for support and where appropriate agree and allocate support according to a broad criterion. Requests for support from the panel can be made by school and education professionals.

Note - A more extensive list of support services for children, young people and families can be found on our SEND Local Offer

SEND and Inclusion

A child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision. Evidence about the progress a young person is making in response to support in school and professional recommendations, if applicable, should be used to identify SEND.

It is the responsibility of each school to make sure that children and young people with SEND are included, respected and valued within their school. It is the right of parents/carers that a young person with SEND is educated in a mainstream setting, although not necessarily a particular mainstream setting, and an ethos of inclusion within a school is essential in facilitating this.

According to SENCOs in Sutton inclusion means:

- Being ambitious for every pupil, acknowledging where they started, and their support needs so that these do not hold them back
- Creating equal access & opportunity for all students
- Ensuring all students are able to make progress by removing barriers to learning
- young people learning alongside their peers not just being in the same room
- Having resources that are available for all
- Incorporating the voice of the young person in planning for their support
- Recognising that adaptations and provision for pupils with SEND are essential for some but useful for all
- All staff identifying themselves as leaders of SEND
- Having a culture with practice that sits across the whole school
- Making sure all young people have what they need

Strong standard

Inclusion meets the 'strong standard' when the 'expected standard' has been met and all the following apply:

Leaders and staff establish strategies that consistently enhance the opportunities and experiences of disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being.

Leaders and staff rigorously monitor the progress of these pupils and consistently ensure that any barriers to success are swiftly and effectively addressed. Strategies are systematically and skilfully adjusted as needed, so that they make a sustained difference to pupils' opportunities and experiences. Well-analysed, quantitative and qualitative data underpins leaders' decisions.

Leaders ensure that the pupil premium strategy is implemented and monitored effectively, including through ongoing, high-quality training and support for staff.

Ofsted
raising standards
improving lives

SEND Leadership

The leadership within a setting is fundamental in setting the value and vision for SEND and inclusion.

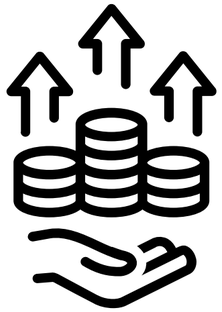
Leaders of SEND:

- Set high expectations for all pupils, including those with SEND.
- Create an inclusive culture which is reflected across the vision and the practices of all staff.
- Ensure that the role of SENCO can be strategic through facilitating a balanced workload.
- Look to expand the accessibility of universal support and how to 'stretch' the unviersal offer as much as possible.
- Consider how pupils can belong, matter, thrive and achieve throughout the time they are in their setting.
- Ensure that all of their SLT are committed to the inclusion of pupils with SEND and have a strong knowlegde base from which they can support their colleagues.
- Are proactive about staff development for SEND and inclusion and protect regular, thoughtful CPD time.
- Prioritise a culture of early and accurate assessment.
- Ensure that there are strong systems in place to record and showcase the support for pupils with SEND for governors/trustees.

Schools are expected to use their school budget to support pupils with SEND. Each school will receive a "notional SEND" figure as part of their funding statement. "Notional SEND" gives an indicative amount of funding that should be used to provide Ordinarily Available Provision for pupils with SEND in the school. It is also used to provide the first £6k of support costs for an individual pupil, including those with an EHCP. It is important to note that "Notional SEND" is not necessarily protected for expenditure on SEND related provision. In addition, a school cannot provide £6k to every student with SEND as the Notional SEND figure is finite. However, many students with SEND will not require this level of support.

For pupils who are issued with an EHCP a school will receive top-up funding which comes from the Local Authority High Needs Block. This top-up funding will allow the school to fund the support documented in Section F of the EHCP by providing the "top-up" between the £6k of support costs the school is expected to fund, and the total costs of the specified support.

In Sutton there are other mechanisms for gaining additional funding for pupils outside of EHCP arrangements in acknowledgement of the fact that some pupils need additional support, but only for a short period of time, or because they have needs which can be met through primarily targeted provision. Schools can refer into the SEND Support Advisory Partnership (SSAP) to request advice, funding for in school support or funding for external services for pupils where they can evidence that they have exhausted their notional budget but where an EHCP is not considered to be necessary.



SEND Funding

	Pre-16 SEN and AP		Post-16 SEN and LDD
	Mainstream settings	Specialist settings	All settings
Element 1: Core education funding	Mainstream per-pupil funding (AWPU)	Base funding of £10,000 for SEN and £8,000 for AP placements, which is roughly equivalent to the level up to which a mainstream provider would have contributed to the additional support provision of a high needs pupil. Base funding is provided on the basis of planned places.	Mainstream per-student funding (as calculated by the national 16-19 funding system)
Element 2: Additional support funding	Contribution of £6,000 to additional support required by a pupil with high needs, from the notional SEN budget		Contribution of £6,000 to additional support required by a student with high needs
Element 3: Top-up funding	"Top-up" funding from the commissioner to meet the needs of each pupil or student placed in the institution		

For all sources of additional funding for pupils with SEND it is important that SENCOs think carefully about how to make best use of this. Staff training, support through targeted intervention and small group working arrangements should be considered over 1:1 deployment of support staff in most instances,

What is Ordinarily Available Provision?

"Ordinarily Available Provision" refers to the support that all Sutton schools, early years, and post 16 settings should be able to provide for children/young people including those with SEND from within their own resources. This includes high-quality teaching strategies which are universal to all, reasonable adjustments and some elements of targeted support.

OAP may also be referred to as SEND Support and is provided through the notional SEND funding allocated to schools. OAP should be available for every young person, in every school and is based on a shared vision and ethos within a setting that prioritises inclusion.

OAP forms the foundation of the Graduated Approach, supporting staff to observe, assess, plan, and review how well individual needs are being met. Through this cycle, staff can identify where a young person may benefit from additional or different support, and make timely, informed decisions in partnership with families and other professionals.

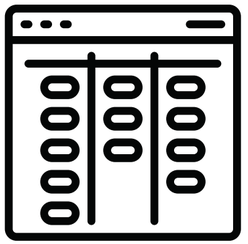
By embedding OAP within high-quality teaching, settings can ensure that all young people—including those with SEND—have access to an inclusive environment that recognises their unique strengths and responds to their needs.

Schools in Sutton have been using the OAP guidance in a range of creative ways, some of which are showcased here. We will be continuing to use SENCO cluster time to share practice and support implementation.

OAP in practice

OAP working walls and pupil learning logbooks

Whole class OAP trackers and overview documents capturing the OAP in place for an individual child



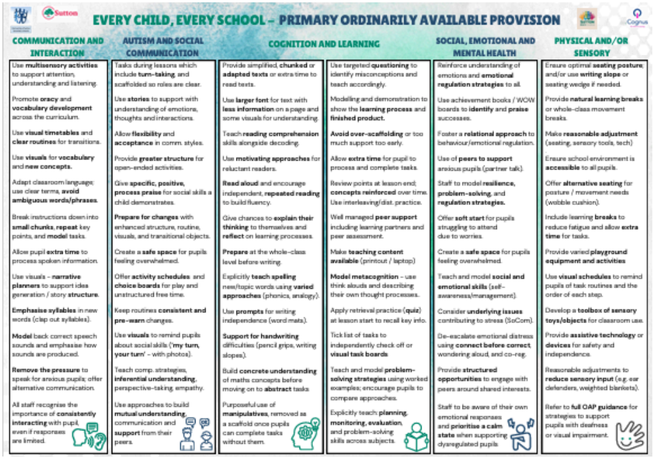
Parent/carer information sessions

Monitoring of OAP through learning walks, ISP reviews, progress meetings

OAP checklists completed before a referral to the SENCO

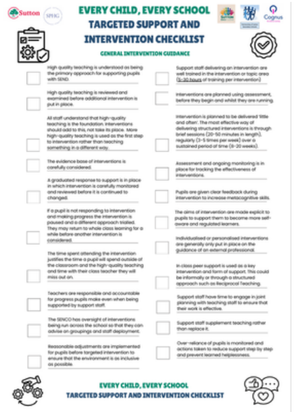
Sharing single pages as part of a weekly bulletin for all staff

OAP written into ISPs



An A3 teacher desk planner

Intervention and classroom checklists are visible around the school



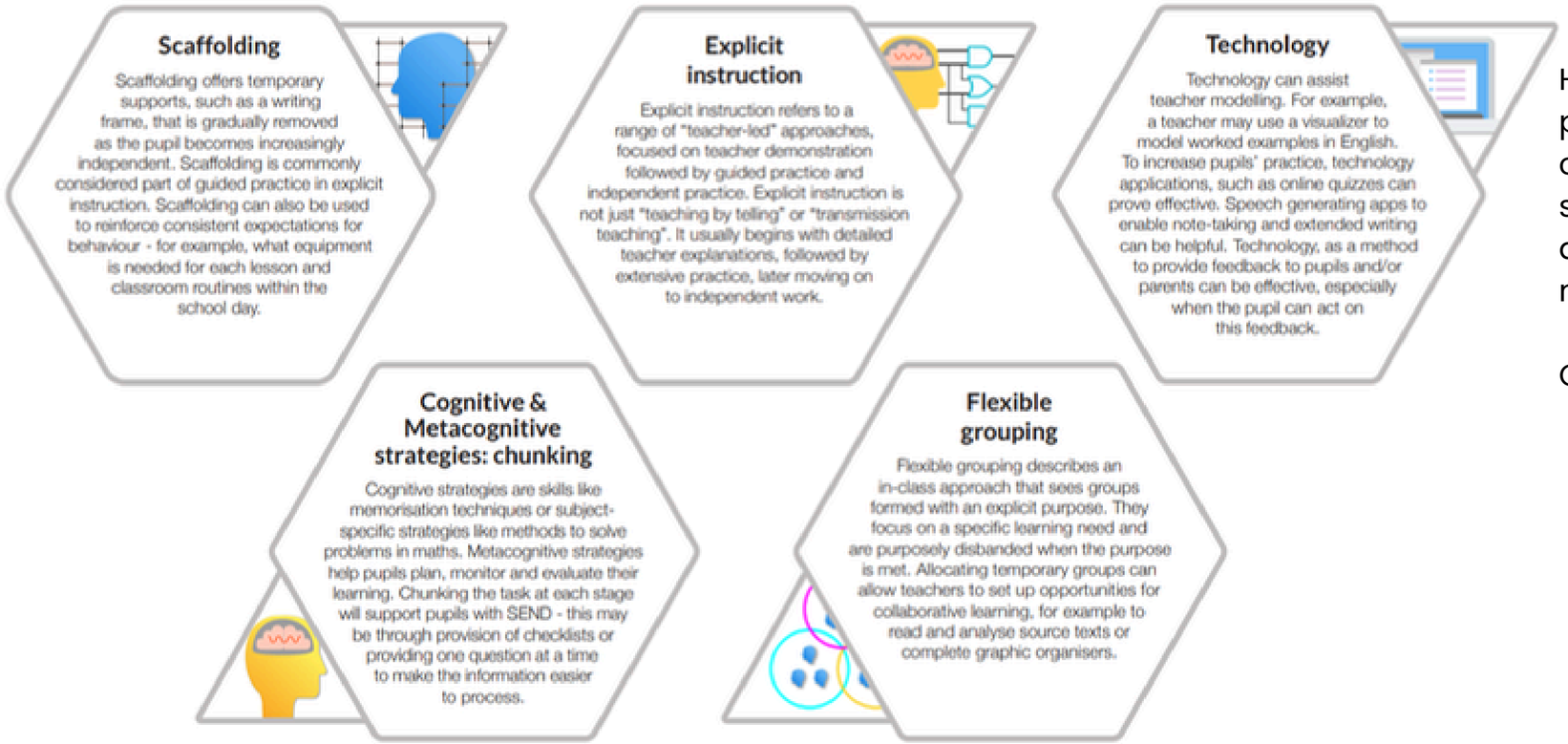
High quality teaching

Sometimes known as Quality First Teaching

According to the Education Endowment Foundation, improving high quality teaching for all pupils will improve outcomes for those with SEND. Read more here, refer to the NASEN teacher handbook or watch this video for more examples. Here are five key strategies they recommend:

"High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN"

SEND Code of Practice, 2015

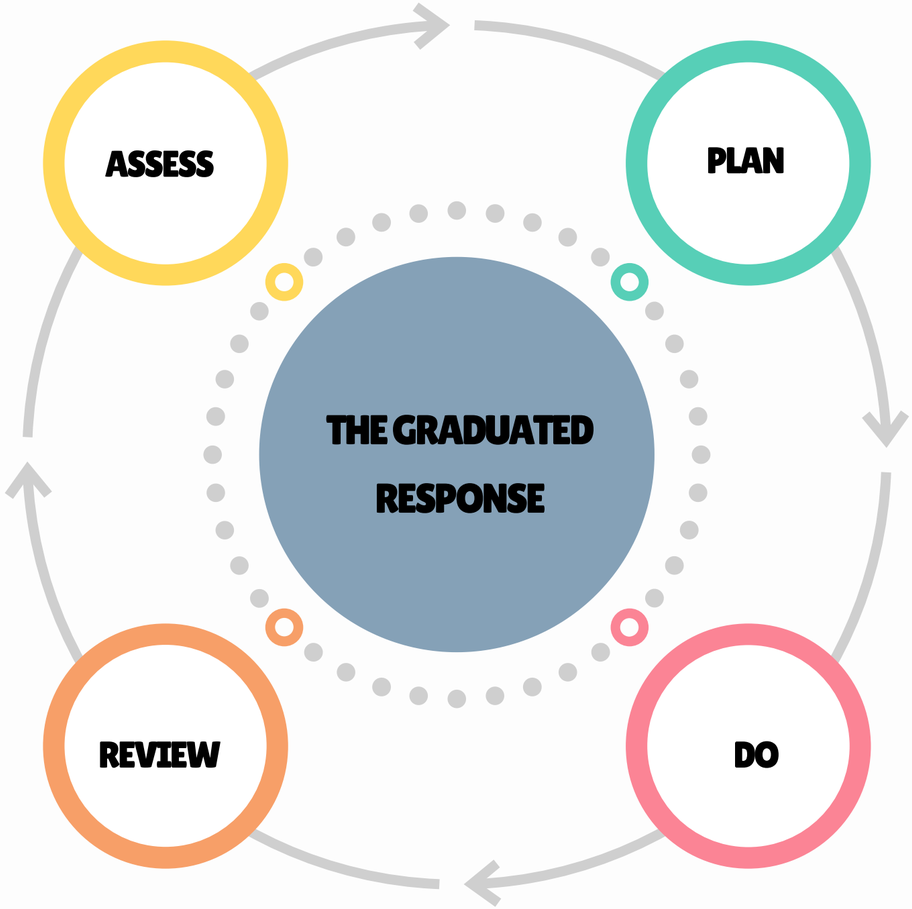


High-quality teaching should enable as many pupils as possible to engage with the national curriculum because additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching (DfE, 2015) although some pupils may require the provision of both.

Other recommended approaches include:

- Give advance warning before asking a question to a pupil and provide wait time before expecting a response
- Keep language simple and explicit and provide a summary at the end
- Teach executive functioning skills across the curriculum - planning, reflecting, time management etc.
- Use technology to support teaching and pupil access and engagement

What is the Graduated Response?

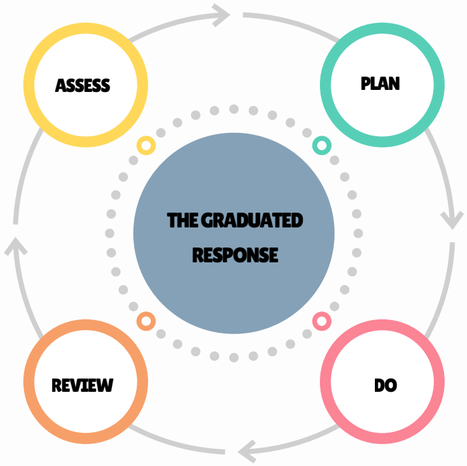


Schools have the responsibility for identifying and addressing SEND. The Graduated Response is a four-step approach used by schools and early years settings to support young people who may have SEND. These stages are Assess, Plan, Do and Review (ADPR). By monitoring and reviewing the support in place interventions or support which are not effective can be adapted or stopped to ensure that progress is being made across the curriculum.

Regular review also enables a better understanding of a pupil's needs to be formed over time, with a constant focus on making sure that pupils are included alongside their peers.

All pupils will have their needs met through high-quality, inclusive teaching. This is SEND Support. Some may need additional support which can include small group activities, focused individual time, and environmental adaptations which are identified through the ADPR process.

Assess



Assessment is the initial step in identifying a pupil's needs. It may include the use of screeners, observations across different contexts or standardised tools. The aim of assessment is to identify the strengths and needs of a pupil so that any necessary support can be planned for.

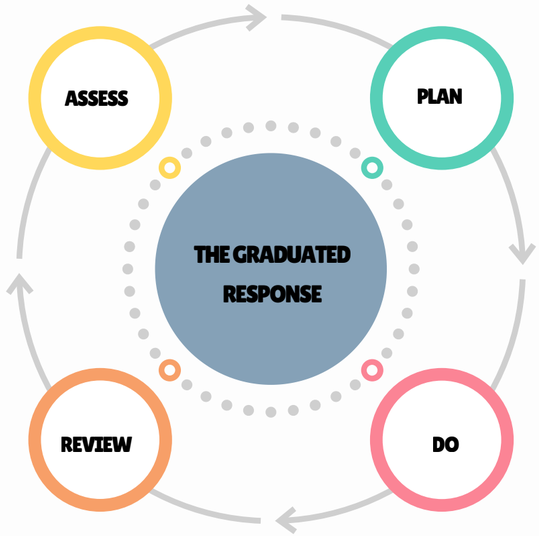
Assessment also provides a baseline of a pupil's needs which can be reviewed after a period of time following consistent and high-quality intervention. Over time if a pupil is not making expected progress assessments may become more specialist.

All young people and young people develop at different rates and when identifying whether a young person has, or may have SEND, the following questions should be considered:

- Is the pupil having difficulty in one or more area of learning that is significantly greater than that of their peers?
- Does the pupil have a disability that is preventing them accessing learning or resources?
- In order for the pupil to make progress, is it necessary to make changes that are additional to, or different from, that which is normally made available?

Plan/Do

Strategies and intervention identified for a young person following on from assessment should then be planned with the young person, parents/carers, key members of school staff and agreed by all. Planning should be supported through making use of the guidance within this document and will involve setting a review date.



"Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class including where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff"

SEND Code of Practice, 2015

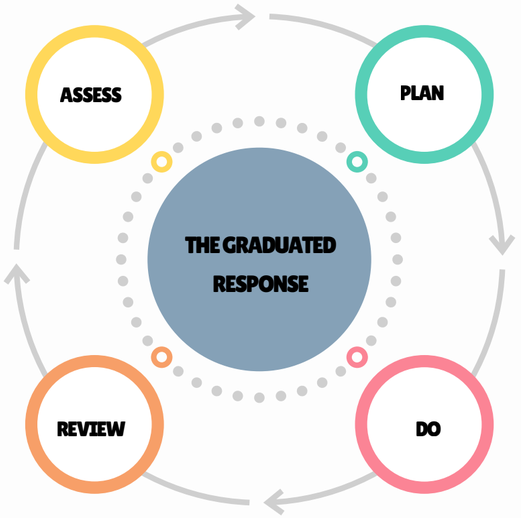
The pupil's support is typically implemented by class teachers and support staff and overseen by the SENCO. It's important that adults tasked with implementing support have the time and understanding to deliver this support. The SENCO can advise on effective implementation, modelling strategies, and problem-solving as support will need to be monitored and adjusted. For pupils with high support needs a support plan will be in place, whereas a pupil passport is likely to be sufficient for those who only require in class strategies.

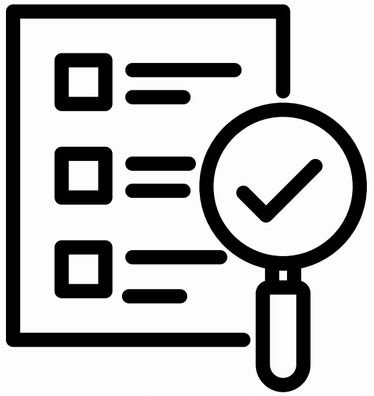
Support plans should:

- Consider the views of the young person and parent/carer.
- (for some pupils) have specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) targets.
- Plan to be reviewed termly.
- Outline specific intervention approaches and key strategies which are evidence-based.
- Be delivered by practitioners with the right skills and knowledge.
- Identify if staff need any additional training and plan for this.

Review

Regular reviews of the plan in place is essential to assess its impact and make necessary adjustments. During the review, it's important to identify both the young person's progress and areas where further support is needed. Using data and observations will show you how far a young person has progressed towards the goals that you set following assessment and how far they have moved on from their baseline position. Review should be at least termly for pupils with a support plan but less regularly for those with a pupil passport.





At the review meeting key members of school staff, the SENCO, the pupil's parents/carers and the pupil (if appropriate) should:

- Review the effectiveness of the support - high quality teaching strategies and specific interventions
- Review the impact of the support on the pupil's progress
- Evaluate the impact and quality of support
- Identify any changes to the outcomes
- Identify and agree any changes to the support and next steps, following a continuation of the ADPR cycle
- At this stage you may consider it necessary to put in a referral for additional support services to undertake more specialist assessment
- Consider if the pupil needs to remain on the SEND register

Universal, targeted and specialist provision

The SEND Code of Practice states that a graduated approach to meeting SEND should be used and that high quality teaching is the first step when a pupil is not making expected progress. All pupils will have their needs met through high-quality, inclusive teaching., with the majority only requiring this level of support.

Universal

The majority of young people will respond positively to high-quality teaching and reasonable adjustments to meet their needs which is universal provision. It includes changes to groupings of pupils and use of evidence-based intervention and group work. Not every young person will need every universal strategy applied.

Targeted

Some pupils may require support that is additional to or different from this universal support. This is 'targeted support'. Support at this level is still expected to be ordinarily available, as appropriate, and does not require additional resource. and is funded from the school's notional budget.

Specialist

A small minority of these pupils may require support in addition to this which is more individualised and often not readily available to all: this is 'specialist support' and can be provided in all types of educational setting. It is likely that this would be recommended by an external professional.

Reasonable adjustments

Schools must make reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people with a disability are not disadvantaged compared to their peers. This means schools have a legal obligation under the Equality Act to support pupils who are disabled with reasonable adjustments, making sure they can benefit from what the school offers in the same way as a pupil who isn't disabled. Reasonable adjustments differ from interventions for SEN which, instead of seeking to adapt the learning environment, are an adapted or additional teaching experience targeted to address a special educational need although there is likely to be overlap for many pupils. There are some adjustments which may not be considered to be reasonable, perhaps because they significantly change the learning environment, are too costly, would not create a 'substantial disadvantage' if not applied or in fact put a pupil at a disadvantage. In other instances if an adjustment would endanger the health and safety either of the disabled pupil or of other people it would not be considered reasonable. Some examples of reasonable adjustments and DfE guidance can be found here with more guidance available here.

- A visually impaired pupil is seated to accommodate their field of vision
- Traffic light cards are available for a pupil to communicate that they need more time
- Assistive technology to support pupils with literacy and/or writing difficulties
- Reducing overstimulation in classrooms and around school buildings
- Adapting snack/healthy eating policies for pupils with diabetes
- Adapting school uniform policy and/or allowing pupils the option of wearing uniform or PE kit
- Letting a pupil go into the dinner hall before others pupils, or allowing them to use quieter corridors, because of sensory processing needs
- Providing ear defenders to a pupil who is sensitive to noise to use as appropriate
- Consequences are reasonably adjusted to ensure that pupils with SEND are not sanctioned for behaviours arising as a consequence entirely of their additional needs

Reasonable adjustments can help level the playing field for pupils in the classroom

Aim to anticipate and remove barriers during the planning phase to make lessons and environments accessible by default

Evidence-based intervention

When making decisions about the support to put in place for an individual pupil or at the whole school level, it's important that decisions are underpinned by research evidence. See here for information about how to use research evidence in school settings.

Rules of thumb

- The gains from intervention must justify the time a pupil will spend outside of the classroom and the high-quality teaching and time with their class teacher they will miss out on.
- Little and often for a finite period of time is most effective.
- Assessment and ongoing monitoring must be in place for tracking the effectiveness of interventions.
- Many interventions for literacy and numeracy become less evidence based for pupils as they get older unless these are individualised and delivered by a member of staff with subject specific knowledge.
- Ways of teaching that focus on enabling students to become more self-aware and regulated learners are most effective. This involves explicitly teaching metacognition, providing high-quality feedback and direct teaching of reading comprehension skills.
- More high-quality teaching is often more effective than teaching something in a different way. Reinforcement through homework and mastery learning approaches should be tried before a different intervention.
- The evidence for setting and streaming pupils is limited, although practical, whereas making use of students to support the learning of their peers is effective when done well.

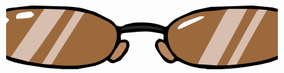
The EEF's teaching and learning toolkit provides an overview of well-evidenced teaching and learning approaches
Greg Brooks' 'What Works for Literacy Difficulties' summary and full guidance document
The EEF Secondary Hub which includes guidance for Improving Literacy, Science, Mathematics and Teacher Feedback
What Works Clearinghouse database
MetaSENse is toolkit from the Nuffield Foundation

(Mis)interventions

With so much information available it can be challenging to make decisions about strategies and provision for learners. Here are some approahces which have been proven to not work, or in some instances have negative impacts for pupils.

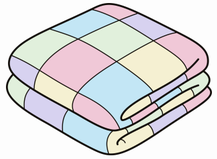
Fidget spinners – these don't distract other pupils but can distract the pupil using them away from the learning

Coloured overlays/tinted lenses – a small number of pupils are supported to experience less visual stress, but they show no impact on reading



Universal mindfulness – when delivered to all students this can potentially have harmful effects for those who require targeted, individual mental health support

Working memory training – tcomputerised programmes show gains when playing them, but no real life transfer of skills



Weighted vests/blankets – differing from deep pressure activities these do not reduce anxiety in autistic pupils

Sensory diet/circuits – when used without consideration of the pupil's individual sensory profile

Learning styles – although pupils may have preferences there is not evidence to suggest that some are entirely 'visual learners'

Source: Steplab, '10 Common SEN (Mis)Interventions)

AI to support inclusive teaching & SEND

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be a valuable tool for supporting inclusive teaching and reducing workload. When used effectively, AI can help staff adapt resources, improve accessibility, develop personalised support strategies, and streamline administrative tasks. AI should be used to enhance professional judgement, not replace it, and all outputs should be reviewed for accuracy and appropriateness before use.

Communication & Literacy	Targets & Provision	Differentiation & Adaptive Teaching	Meetings & Administration
Adapt texts and learning materials to different reading abilities.	Turn broad concerns into clear and measurable SMART targets.	Adapt resources to meet a range of learning needs.	Summarise meeting notes into clear records and actions.
Create social stories and communication scripts for specific situations.	Generate practical provision ideas and reasonable adjustments.	Create differentiated questions with appropriate levels of challenge.	Draft parent letters and communications in accessible language.
Generate word banks, glossaries and writing supports for classroom tasks.	Create TA briefing notes to support lesson preparation.	Personalise learning materials around pupils' interests and strengths.	Create pupil passports, one-page profiles and transition documents.
Simplify instructions, worksheets and assessment questions.	Develop question prompts that encourage independence and thinking skills.	Generate visual schedules, task breakdowns and support prompts.	Condense lengthy reports and EHCPs into staff-friendly summaries.
Support communication with families through translation and plain English.	Produce quick-reference guidance for staff supporting specific needs.	Break homework and independent tasks into manageable steps.	Support reflection and problem-solving as a professional thinking partner.

Important Considerations

- **Review all AI-generated content for accuracy and suitability.**
- **Never enter identifiable pupil information into public AI tools.**
- **Follow school GDPR, safeguarding and data protection guidance.**
- **Use AI to support your professional judgement, not replace it.**

Use of support staff

The use of support staff holds benefits for pupils when staff are well trained, engage in joint planning with a young person's class teacher and work towards clearly identified targets for a pupil. Support from teaching assistants needs to supplement teaching rather than substitute it to be effective. Support must not reduce the interactions pupils have with their class teacher who remains their key educator and ensure that they do not miss out on chunks of curriculum content and therefore learning loss.

"Targeted deployment, where teaching assistants (TAs) are trained to deliver an intervention to small groups or individuals has a higher impact, whereas deployment of teaching assistants in everyday classroom environments has not been shown to have a positive impact on learner outcomes (EEF)". When pupils are removed from their main learning environment there is a risk that doing so can unintentionally lower expectations, restrict curriculum access, reduce opportunities for interaction, and effectively segregate students (EEF, 2021).

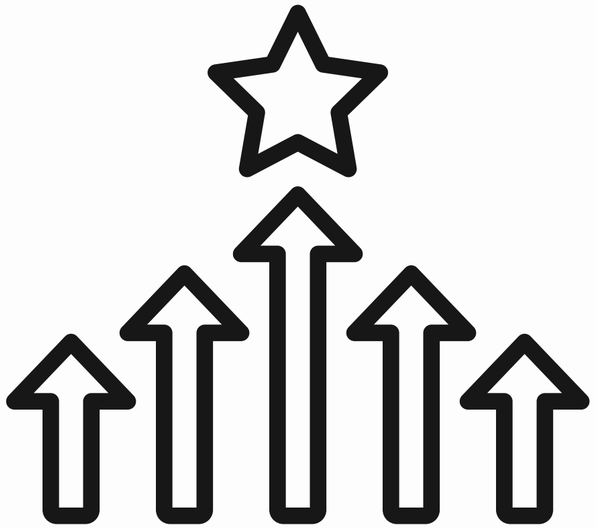
BEST PRACTICE

- Support staff have subject and curriculum knowledge in the subjects in which they are supporting OR are deployed to support regulation because they have a good relationship with the pupil
- Support staff are deployed in a subject specific/intervention specific manner in which they are well trained on (5-30 hours of training per intervention/subject specialist knowledge)
- The most effective way of delivering structured interventions is through brief sessions (20-50 minutes in length), regularly (3-5 times per week) over a sustained period of time (8-20 weeks)
- Interventions are delivered with fidelity, guided by assessment and supported by resources and lessons plans
- The focus of additional adult support is to increase pupil independence and full integration in the classroom alongside their peers so that over time less support is required
- Over-reliance of pupils is monitored and actions taken to prevent this
- Support pupils and parents/carers to understand the role of support staff so that there is a shared understanding by all
- Watch this short course created by the EEF for more information or read their guidance here

Professional standards for teaching assistants

Work completed by several teaching unions provides a framework for the standards that could be applied to staff working as teaching assistants to raise the status and professionalism of these roles. *These standards do not replace the professional standards for HLTAs; they are complimentary to them.*

For the full list of standards please see here.



Within this framework there are four key themes chosen:

1. Personal and professional conduct - for TAs to provide effective support they need to be clear about their role and responsibilities and how these fit within the wider structure of the school. They should be seen by pupils as role models and always maintain appropriate boundaries.

2. Knowledge and understanding - TAs should have sufficient knowledge and skills to help teachers support pupils in achieving their maximum potential. This could include: subject knowledge, specialist skills and knowledge to support pupils with SEND, knowledge of the curriculum, lesson planning and evaluation, and behaviour management strategies.

3. Teaching and learning - TAs work under the supervision of a teacher in accordance with arrangements made by the headteacher of the school.

4. Working with others - TAs should work collaboratively with others, communicating the knowledge that they have about a pupil to others.

Relational approaches

A relational approach is based on the premise that behaviour should be seen through the context of the experiences of the young person (Jones et al, 2024)

Relational approaches understand how trauma or adversity can impact young people and young people. They understand how relationships are **the only way** of helping young people move on from difficulties caused in the context of damaging relationships. Relationships are used to support engagement, well-being and curiosity in young people as well as to connect with parents and carers. All schools are recommended to adopt a relational approach at the whole school level.

Settings may be able to access the Building Stronger Foundations programme which provides training and support to work towards becoming relational and trauma informed. For more information about Nurture groups and nurturing interventions see guidance from Cognus EPS here.

An embedded relational approach will lead to staff consistently trying to understand what lies beneath a surface behaviour, reminding pupils of boundaries when things don't go to plan and making sure there is time to repair relationships after something has gone wrong. Connection and positive relationships with families will also be prioritised.

Boundaries and structure are important for a sense of safety, predictability, and security – moving away from a behaviourist approach doesn't mean reducing expectations. In fact, rewards and consequences to certain behaviours should be explicit without the need to enforce punitive approaches that shame or isolate students. A relational approach moves from staff members being 'behaviour managers' to 'stress regulators' .

By ensuring adults attune to, understand, and respond helpfully to the diverse and evolving emotional needs of young people, this creates feelings of safety and sets the focus on holistically supporting young people to thrive (Cavanaugh 2016; Reynolds 2021).

Working with parents and carers

When parents/carers are working in alignment with school staff outcomes for young people are best. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that parents and carers are aware of what is available for pupils at the SEN Support level. Schools will aim to instil confidence in parents and carers about the value of high quality teaching and universal/targeted provision within their schools to ensure that there is a shared understanding about what is available and what is effective for supporting young people with additional needs.

It's important that parents/carers, and young people when appropriate, are involved in decision-making. This is especially important for families who may find it hard to engage with professionals because these feelings may come from a sense of mistrust in the system which we need to try and overcome. Communication is key, making sure to find out the communication preferences of a family taking into account learning, neurodiversity or cultural factors that may have an impact on this.

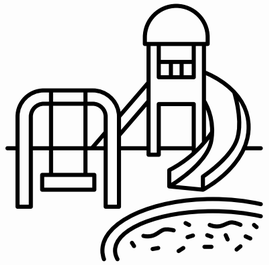
Parents/carers may have different ideas about what is in the best interests of their young person but it’s always important to hear their views when you share yours and your rationale for thinking the way you do. Signposting information and putting on training and information sessions for parent/carers can be a good way of dispelling myths, making use of external professionals to support you in doing so.

Transitions

Points of transition require planning and adjustment and support ahead of transitions should be planned well in advance. The move from primary to secondary school is an exciting transition but is a big change. However, many of the same expectations, supports and processes are in existence in both types of settings and most young people settle successfully within the first few weeks.

There are a range of processes in Sutton to support transition for pupils with SEND. This includes cross-phase school visits for SENCOs to increase their familiarity with settings young people may transition from or to, and a transition afternoon for SENCOs to share information about individual pupils. Joint working between schools and parents/carers is the best way of ensuring transitions are as successful as possible, by focusing on supporting young people to become as independent in their learning and regulation as possible throughout the time in primary school. Additionally, it would not be typical for schools to submit EHCNAs for pupils in Year 6, neither for secondary schools need to exclude pupils in Year 7 (unless in exceptional circumstances), but instead to maximise transitional support.

See here for useful information from the Infinity Support Hub about transition support.

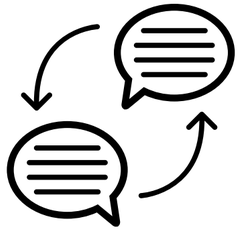


SUTTON KS2 INDEPENDCE INDICATORS

Below are Indicators which have been written by Sutton SENCOs to describe developmental goals for young people to achieve by the time they leave primary school:

- Can access shared support in lessons
- Can manage unstructured periods with limited support
- Can focus in a lesson for 30 mins without needing a movement break
- Can read Key Stage 2 texts with differentiation
- Can ask for help from adults and engage in discussions about their learning
- Can transition between tasks and subjects

Communication and interaction



Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or understanding and using social rules of communication. These issues may also affect their reading, learning, socialising and making friends and behaviour and control of emotions (DfE).

You can find lots more information about communication and interaction needs, recommended support and resources on the Cognus Speech and Language Therapy website.

Some pupils may be identified with developmental Language Disorder (DLD). DLD is a long-term condition where young people have difficulties talking and/or understanding. It affects their language, social communication and academic learning. On average 2, in every classroom of 30 will have DLD.

Please note that the strategies listed in the following pages are strategies that schools may try, but are not an exhaustive list and should be used in line with professional judgement.

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Augmentative and alternative learning 33

Engagement in learning 34

Understanding language for learning 35

Using language for learning and to get on with others 36

Fluency 37

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Oracy

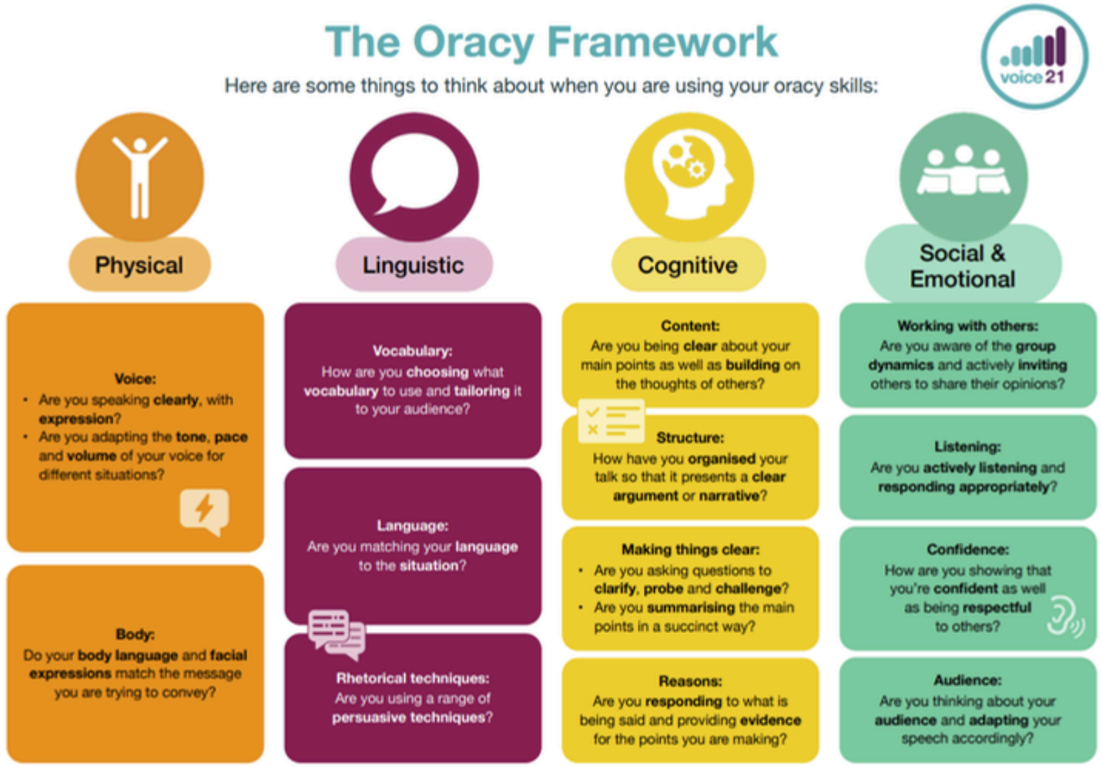
Oracy is the skills of speaking and listening and involves how well someone can express themselves, listen and communicate with others. Oracy skills underpin successful engagement with learning across the curriculum in the same way that literacy skills do.

Oracy works towards developing more purposeful talk from pupils which in turn promotes deeper thinking. There is also an equity factor in focusing on Oracy in light of what is known about the lower levels of language development seen in disadvantaged children. For pupils, being heard and engaging in learning in a way that is often more motivating than reading and writing is positive, as is the additional benefit that a focus on Oracy can have on development of social skills, sense of belonging and development of peer relationships.

See Voice21 for more information

The Oracy Skills Framework (OSF) specifies the various skills young people need to develop to deal with a range of different talk situations.

Schools can access a range of Talk Matters resources and training through the Talk Matters Knowledge Hub page or arrange visits to Talk Matters schools to see Dialogic Teaching in practice.



Some ways of teaching Oracy skills in the classroom include:

- Explicitly teaching and defining key words and subject-specific vocabulary and having pupils define them in their own words.
- Signalling key words and set an expectation that pupils use these in their verbal responses.
- Challenge and support vagueness in responses.
- Regular debates and discussions in which key skills such as summarising, hypothesising, questioning etc. are taught, modelled and reinforced before and throughout tasks.
- Scaffold talking in the same ways you might scaffold writing.
- Teaching language techniques and referring to them across all subjects.
- Modelling and discussing effective and non-effective speakers.
- Praise what is said, not just how it's said.

Nationally, around 1 in 5 children experience challenges with speech, language and communication. Early identification and support can make a lasting difference to children's learning, social relationships and emotional wellbeing.

Schools and early years settings across Sutton now have free access to Verbo, an NHS-developed digital speech and language therapy toolkit. The rollout means education staff can access practical training, screening tools and intervention resources to support children's communication development at a universal and targeted level. This is at no cost to the school or setting. Please get in touch with our Verbo lead Emily Bristow should you need further information.

Verbo provides teachers, SENCOs, teaching assistants and other education staff with evidence-based tools they can use confidently in everyday practice. The platform includes:

- Staff training webinars
- Short intervention videos
- Structured screening tools to identify speech, language and communication needs
- Automatically generated personalised targets for individual pupils
- Learning environment checklists to support communication-friendly classrooms
- A growing collection of occupational therapy resources, including pre-writing and handwriting support

Children and young people do not log in directly. Instead, the toolkit supports staff to embed strategies that benefit whole classes as well as individual pupils.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

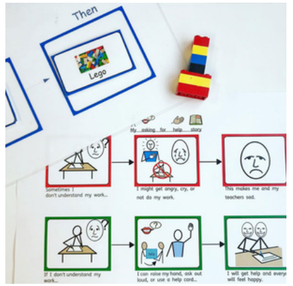
Universal uses of AAC

Universal AAC provision would generally be made available for pupils without the need for specialist assessment and can benefit those with or without SEND.

This could include:

- Visual timetables and schedules
- Classroom routines displayed visually
- Written and visual instructions alongside verbal explanations
- Subject-specific vocabulary banks and word walls
- Graphic organizers and thinking maps
- Choice boards for classroom activities
- Communication-friendly teaching strategies (wait time, checking understanding)
- Visual checklists for task completion
- Access to digital tools for typing, note-taking, and text-to-speech
- Captioned videos and multimedia resources

Targeted uses of AAC



AAC may be targeted in its use or in its design and would include supports identified for pupils who require more than unviersal strategies to undertsand and make themselves understood.

This could include:

- Use of gesture and natural signs by staff
- Communication boards for specific subjects or settings
- Symbol-supported worksheets and classroom materials
- Personal vocabulary banks tailored to curriculum areas
- Low-tech AAC systems (topic boards, communication books)
- Speech-to-text or text-to-speech software for identified students
- Structured sentence starters and communication scaffolds
- Supported use of AAC apps during lessons

Where a pupil has been identified as neeing the support of AAC it is important that this is made available to them throughout the day. AAC needs to be participative meaning that it helps someone take part in daily activities and interactions meaningfully.

Engagement in learning

See here for more information on the Cognus website

Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Demonstrate active listening skills Self-monitor so that they do not disrupt classroom learning Focusing and maintain attention to tasks until a break in the learning Self-regulate emotions Ignore environmental distractions	Use the names of young people to gain their attention and cue them into the task. Use of visuals to support attention and listening, e.g., help board on the whiteboard, or by their desk, visual timers, visuals. Reduction of distractions, and / or background noise (e.g., projectors, windows, class noise). Place individuals with attention and listening difficulties towards the front of the classroom. Use of multisensory activities, to support attention and listening skills. Notice and praise good attention and listening skills, reminding students of good active listening skills and the start of the task and reinforcing throughout. Show awareness of the fact that different learners listen differently. Use of visuals and timers to represent when an activity is finishing or changing.	Positioning in the classroom in areas identified as being supportive of listening and attention. Use of a visual timetable (for the whole day, or for individual lessons/tasks) which over time a pupil becomes independent for maintaining. Intervention targeted on building attention and listening skills.

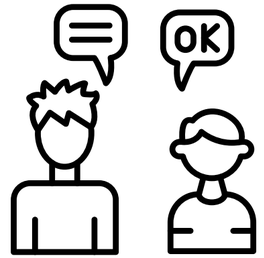
Understanding language for learning

See here for more information on the Cognus website

Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Understand key vocabulary and concepts Follow and engage in conversations and class discussions Understand and follow longer instructions so that they can get started on tasks independently	Language within the classroom adapted, and use of clear language with abstract or ambiguous words and phrases explicitly taught and discussed in context. Use of visuals to support teaching of vocabulary and new concepts with use of word maps. This could include graphic organisers, use of the Frayer model etc. After initial teaching regularly consolidate vocabulary through vocabulary quizzes. Break instructions down into smaller and more manageable chunks, repeat key points and encourage pupils to note down key information Repeat key instructions and use visuals to support spoken instructions (e.g., help box on the board). Provide examples and demonstrations to support understanding of the task and expectations. Check the individual's understanding of what has been asked, e.g., "what did Miss tell us to do?", so the individual is required to explain / relay the task. Provide additional time to process spoken information. Physical environment that is organised and well-defined and labelled using written and visual cues.	Additional vocabulary instruction in the classroom. Task list/visuals to accompany task instructions. Intervention to build receptive language skills and knowledge of concepts. Intervention to develop understanding of questions, prediction and problem-solving skills.

Using language for learning and to get on with others

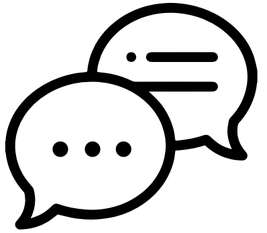
See here for more information on the Cognus website



Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Learn and use new vocabulary, particularly abstract words, and concepts Use strategies to overcome word finding difficulties (tip of the tongue feeling) Express wants, needs, thoughts and emotions Form long, complex, and grammatically accurate sentences Get their message across Repair communication breakdown	Expand on what the pupil says, by repeating back what they've said but with additional information added. Model the correct use of language and grammar. Give choices to help the young person provide an answer. Provide sentence starters and examples of key phrases to support a young person in formulating their response. Use of visuals, e.g., narrative planners to help formulate ideas and the structure of a piece of writing. Provide opportunities for structured talk, including through an Oracy approach or the use of dialogic teaching whereby teachers use strategies that enable pupils to reason, discuss, argue and explain rather than merely respond, in order to develop higher order thinking and articulacy.	Additional vocabulary instruction in the classroom. Intervention to build expressive language skills Opportunities to develop and rehearse ideas orally with an adult or peer. Explicit teaching of vocabulary as new words are introduced within the classroom using visuals as well as structured activities to 'explore' new words and to ensure that they are meaningful.

Fluency

See here for more information on the Cognus website or the STAMMA and RCSLT websites.



Children and young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Targeted support that may help
Speak in a slow and relaxed way Feel confident to communicate their ideas in the classroom in front of their peers Feel confident when presenting on something Explain what helps them to communicate effectively	Making sure that the young person feels listened to and not under pressure to speak "perfectly". Focus on content, insight, effort and contribution when praising them. Model a slightly slower, calm speaking rate and use natural pauses. Try to avoid saying "slow down" or "take a breath". Be mindful of the overall pace of talk in the room. When emotions are high (e.g. excitement), the classroom can feel busier and more chaotic, which can speed everyone up without realising. Avoid putting the child on the spot with direct questions (e.g. "What's the answer?"). Give thinking time before expecting a response, or partner talk before whole class sharing. Respond to the message, not the stammer. It is about what they say, not how they say it. Wait for them to finish without interrupting or finishing their sentences; there is a risk we may not phrase things in the way they intended.	For students who find whole class speaking difficult, consider alternatives such as presenting to a small group and using visuals or props. Provide time for small group rehearsal before whole-class sharing. For group working allocate roles and monitor the peer dynamics.

Selective/Situational Mutism

Children and young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Targeted support that may help
Feel confident and comfortable to speak in front of others in some situations Manage feelings of worry Ask for help and express their wants and needs Communicate their ideas for learning Form relationships with others	Remove the pressure to speak in situations (comments rather than questioning), but always provide the opportunity to do so and lots of reassurance if the pupil seems like they want to try. Provide other ways to communicate or help-seek e.g., help cards, emotion faces, post-its. Not showing surprise if a pupil does speak and allowing a pupil to speak through friends where appropriate. Subtle reassurance for all attempts at communication. All staff to recognise the importance of consistently interacting with the young person even if their responses are limited. Provide opportunities for the pupil to talk about less threatening subjects.	An intervention focused on building a trusting relationship with one key adult in school focused on non-verbal and playful interactions until a pupil is confident to speak. Following this a 'sliding-in' approach should be used in which another member of staff observes and then becomes involved in the activities until the young person feels comfortable enough to also speak with them present. Intervention to develop social skills or a friendship group for the pupil.

Tools to support assessment and identification of need

Cognus Therapy Screeners – a screener and referral form for children and young people with or without an EHCP for speech and language therapy and occupational therapy

Universally Speaking – booklets detailing the ages and stages of children's communication development from birth to 18 years.

Speech and Language UK – Online progress checking tools for 6 months to 11 years.

The Communication Trust – information about communication friendly environments, and suggested assessment and audit tools

The Wellcomm Primary Toolkit is a norm referenced assessment tool for speech and language development

The British Picture Vocabulary Scale, Third Edition (BPVS-3) is a test of receptive vocabulary

The Renfrew Action Picture Test (5th edition) and Expressive Vocabulary Test testing expressive language and grammar

School staff to attend training courses provided locally e.g., ELKLAN, SEND Champion Training.

Before making a referral into the Speech and Language Therapy Service it is advised that you complete a screener to gain a sense of the level of the young person's needs and strategies or interventions which can be used first.

Useful resources

Black Sheep Press for a range of free worksheets and programmes to support speech, language and communication

Cognus Therapies Graduated Response for more information about universal, targeted and specialist provisions

Cognus Therapies classroom support strategies guidance

RCSLT Selective Mutism information

DLD Fact Sheet, Raising awareness of Developmental Language Disorder

Talk Matters training and resources accessed via the Knowlegde Hub and Sutton's Talk Matters Wellbeing Toolkit – developed with Jigsaw4U to support the links between communication, wellbeing and behaviour

Autism and social communication

Autism is not a 'disorder' or a 'burden', it is simply a difference. Just like every other brain type, the autistic brain has its negatives and things that make life more difficult. But autistic brains also have many positives that others may never have the opportunity to experience. These may include having a logical brain with good attention to detail, the ability to focus deeply, strong memory skills and unique thought processes. Autistic people place less value on small talk and more on openness and honesty. Autistic people may also have lots of knowledge and skills in one specific area.

Autistic people have brains that process the world differently to non-autistic people, which impacts both positively and negatively on aspects of their thinking and learning; sensory processing; social relational experiences; and communicative style, abilities and preferences (Spectrum Gaming).

Autism is not one of the four main categories of need contained within the Code of Practice, however in light of the number of young people and young people in Sutton with a diagnosis or presenting needs we have decided to dedicate a separate section in this guidance.

"An autistic person's experience of and ability to be successful in the world, is dependent on the compatibility between their individual profile and their physical/ social environment." - Dr Julia Leatherland

Autism + Environment = Outcome

Please note that the strategies listed in the following pages are strategies that schools may try, but are not an exhaustive list and should be used in line with professional judgement

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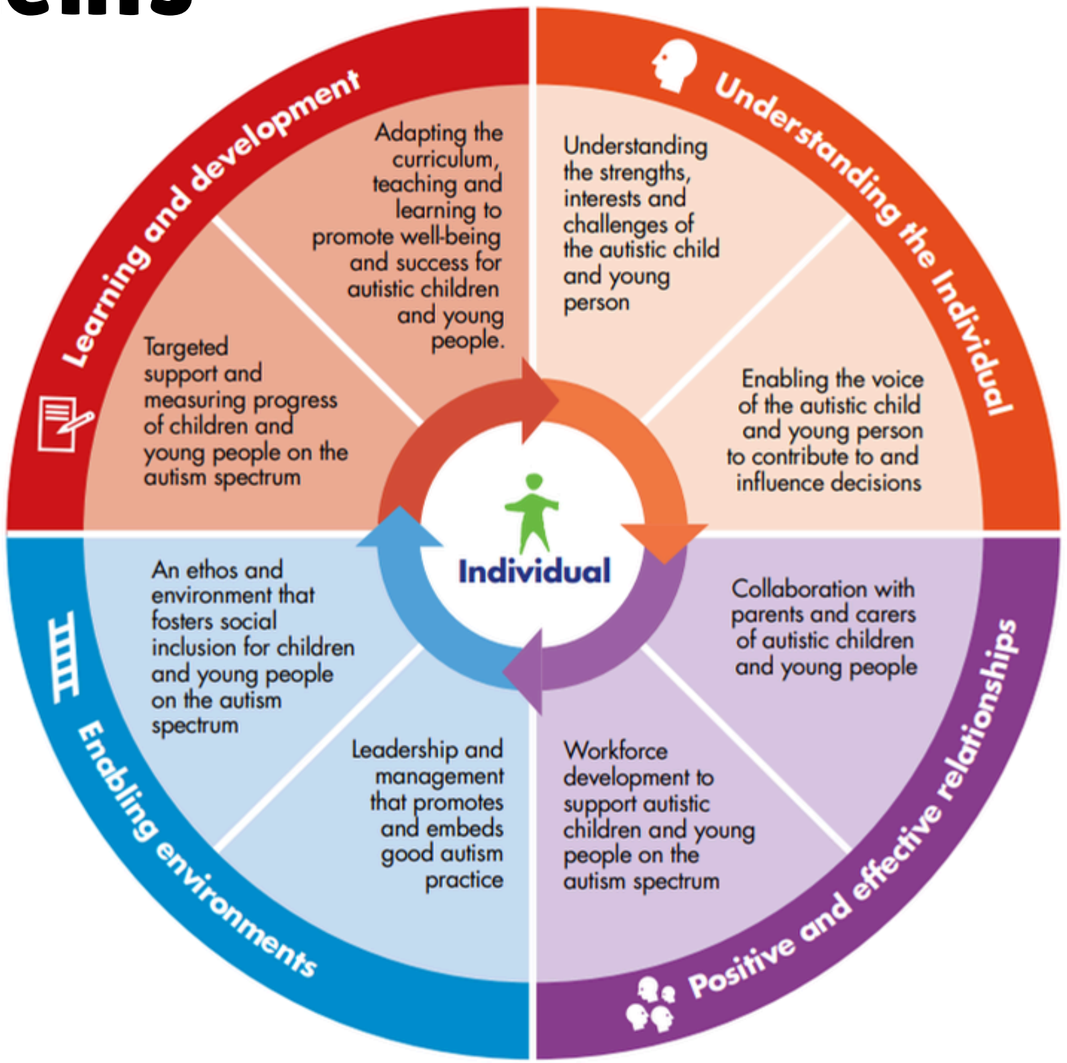
Autism friendly environments

The majority of autistic students will attend a mainstream setting, it is therefore imperative that all schools and education settings have a good understanding of best practice related to supporting autistic students. A comprehensive report was commissioned by the Autism Education Trust in 2019 to provide guidelines for best practice for all age groups of learners with Autism and the following eight principles were derived from this.

For settings who wish to audit their current practice the AET School Standards Framework provide a range of statements and tasks related to each of the above eight principles to provide a holistic self-evaluation.



Autism Education Trust

The SPELL framework

The NAS's SPELL framework offers a way of conceptualising key practical and ethical considerations for settings when considering how they can be 'Autism friendly'. The five principles are derived from research evidence and demonstrate how environmental changes and adaptations can be enabling, rather than disabling for both autistic young people and adults. The framework can be used for classroom planning and implemented alongside other specific interventions.

STRUCTURE

Make the world more predictable through structure, routine and accessibility.

Increase a student's understanding of the world around them and their ability to communicate their needs will reduce stress and anxiety.

POSITIVE

Utilise the strengths of a young person to build feelings of self-confidence and competence.

Set challenging yet realistic expectations across all areas and provide support to ensure that change and challenge are not avoided by autistic pupils.

Support behaviour through seeking to understand its function, use a consistent approach and teach positive alternatives.

EMPATHY

Respond with empathy and seek to understand autistic pupils in a holistic way.

Seek to truly understand a young person's everyday lived experience.

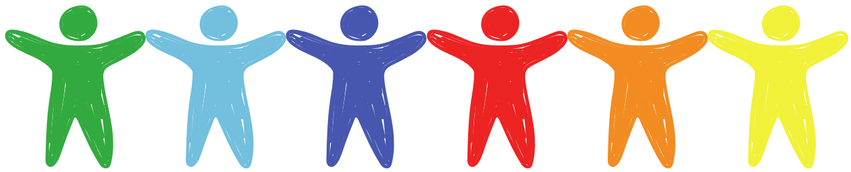
LOW AROUSAL

Reduce sources of stress and support pupils to tolerate low levels of stress.

Planned and sensitive exposure to stimuli is needed, alongside provision of low arousal environments for time when focus and concentration is required.

LINKS

Parents/carers and where possible the young person should be involved in all review and target setting processes.

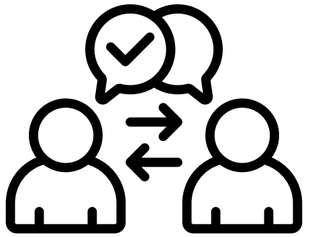


Social interaction

See here for more information on the Cognus website

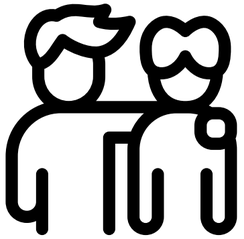
Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Feel comfortable and safe in their social environment Demonstrate awareness of social 'rules' and others around them Initiate interactions with peers and maintain conversation Understand non-verbal communication, e.g. gesture Understand how others may feel	Acceptance and flexibility in terms of how a young person communicates. This may include learning to interpret their body language and other signs which indicate how they're feeling. Tasks during lessons which involve turn-taking, and which are scaffolded and facilitated so that young people know the role they will be taking. Model and explicitly reference social skills including conversation initiation, non-verbal communication and turn-taking during interactions throughout the day. Provide social scripts to support children in game and conversational settings to take turns and interact with one another. Refer explicitly to texts to support with understanding of characters' emotions, thoughts, intentions and social interactions. Provide specific, positive, process praise, identifying social skills that a young person has demonstrated. Model how others may think and feel in both real life and hypothetical situations.	Modelling of social language throughout the day during structured and unstructured activities. Comic Strip Conversations used to teach conversation skills and to build awareness of how others may be thinking in a particular situation. Intervention to build pragmatic social skills and social understanding. Use of social stories to teach everyday social skills. Intervention to build awareness of turn-taking and interactional rules. Lunch time groups with the provision of games and structured social opportunities monitored by school staff.

Shared attention



Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Focus their attention on lessons they are not interested in Follow rules and instructions directed at the whole class Engage in a sustained interaction with someone else Interact with someone on topics other than their preferred interests	Build in partner talk or paired activities during all lessons, with adult mediation to model. Positively reinforce when a young person is able to follow an adult led instruction or task. Make sure you're face to face when communicating with a young person and use their name to gain their attention. Provide longer for a young person to respond and use less verbal language to increase their comprehension. Be really clear about the purpose of a task and how it fits into the larger programme of study. Making tasks and lessons more purposeful will support pupil engagement.	Use different types of interaction to build an emotional connection with a young person and to help them develop a range of social and emotional skills. Support young people and young people to recognise their strengths and interests and provide structured opportunities to engage with peers who have a shared interest.

Friendship skills and developing positive relationships



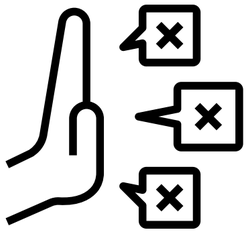
Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Make friends and maintain friendships Develop their social problem solving skills Practise turn taking and social interaction skills Engage in conversation with peers	Think carefully about pupil groupings in the classroom so that a young person doesn't need to select their own group but is working alongside peers who will actively seek to include them. Use a peer buddy system to ensure a young person has someone to play with during break and lunch times. Prompts and encouragement to interact with others for young people who need a confident boost to do so. Activity schedules for unstructured free time. Approaches to develop the mutual understanding, communication, and support between autistic young people their peers, and staff. For example, teaching peer awareness, peer mentoring schemes and other positive activities to promote neurodiversity throughout the year.	Intervention to teach social and friendship skills. Intervention focused on understanding Autistic Identity. Intervention to explicitly develop relationships followed up by sessions to problem-solve any difficulties in the friendships formed. Collaborative group tasks in the classroom. Support young people to recognise their strengths and interests and provide structured opportunities to engage with peers who have a shared interest.

Emotional literacy and regulation

See here for more information on the Cognus website

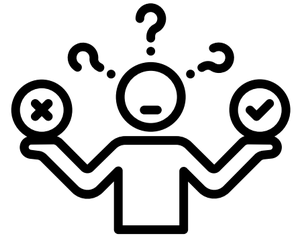
Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Understand and express how they're feeling Regulate their emotions so that they do not become overwhelmed Use adaptative strategies to self-regulate Recognise emotions in others Manage everyday situations because they find these stressful	Reduce expectations of communication with a young person is stressed or anxious. Reinforce an understanding of emotions and emotional regulation strategies to all pupils, facilitating discussion so that young people can gain ideas from their peers about self-regulation strategies and normalise experiencing difficult emotions during RSE or whole school mental health and emotional wellbeing events. Have visuals around school to remind young people of emotional regulation strategies and use language from Emotion Coaching to normalise feelings and to show empathy and offer guidance. Provide clear instructions on where to go and who to talk to when pupils feel uncomfortable. Reflecting on challenging behaviours and looking to identify if these are in fact attributable to underlying issues in relation to social anxiety and/or difficulties in understanding and/or communication. Monitor the energy levels of a young person and support them to make use of calming activities if they are becoming overwhelmed.	Intervention to explicitly teach feelings vocabulary and development of self-regulation strategies. Intervention to teach about anxiety and stress. Group sessions to implement Zones of Regulation or other emotional literacy strategies. Providing a quiet space at break and lunchtimes for a young person to use if they need a quieter space to reset. Have a safe space that young people can use if they are starting to feel overwhelmed accessed by showing a time card to their teacher.

Requires support with change and transition



Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Manage transition points during the day Feel ok when something changes or happens which is unusual Follow rules or instructions which are not in line with their preferences Do things in ways which might be different to usual Move on from things they are really interested in	Have prompt cards of important rules which can quickly be referred to. Colour code resources and timetable to show different subjects. Use motivators to encourage young people towards things that are new. Provide specific, positive, process praise when pupils are able to engage in activities outside of their comfort zone but make use of regulatory strategies to support themselves in doing so. Provide written information about the rules and structures of the school day.	Advance warning of changes to the timetable or subject teachers. Where advance warning is not possible provide 5 minutes at the start of the lesson for the pupil to self-regulate. Intervention focused on understanding Autistic Identity. Direct teaching of strategies to cope with change such as using a change card alongside a visual timetable. Additional visits to a new environments/classrooms in school, ideally when the space is quieter. Transition booklets ahead of moves into a new year group, school trips, or other activities which sit outside of usual routines.

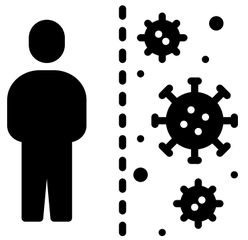
Flexibility of thought



Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Think in an abstract way Work on open-ended tasks or tasks where there is not a right or wrong answer Engage in unstructured conversations or interactions Problem solve	Make sure there is explanation of non-literal language and class discussion to explore phrases and language. Explicit teaching of comprehension strategies, inferential understanding, perspective taking and empathetic thinking during in class discussions across all subjects. Providing greater structure for open ended/creative activities (e.g., choice from a range of options, more scaffolding for tasks which involve prediction, writing about actual experience instead of imaginative writing, etc.). Make sure a student knows what they are aiming for - show them a completed example, give them a clear structure for the work, how long? How many? How will I know I have finished? Differentiate and provide choices for collaborative working if a young person would rather work by themselves for some of the time. Personal materials to reduce any difficulties which may arise from the need to share resources with peers.	Provide opportunities and activities which focus explicitly on problem-solving across the curriculum and the school week, making sure to identify and reinforce any strategies that the young person is successfully using. Intervention focused on understanding Autistic Identity. Learning mentor sessions to reflect on progress across the curriculum.

Demand avoidance

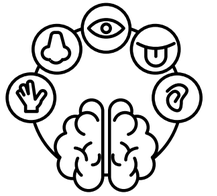
See here for Cognus Extreme Demand Avoidance guidance



Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Take part in low-pressured interactions, even with trusted adults Follow expectations and rules which they do not see the purpose of Regulate their worries and anxiety throughout the day Engage positively with learning	Building relationships so the young person feels a sense of safety and connection (reducing perceived threat and anxiety) through approach such as PACE and 'Connect before Connect). PANDA model: picking battles (not sweating the small stuff), anxiety management (emotional literacy and regulation), negotiation and collaboration (subtle and sensitive language and calm reasoned rationale), disguising and managing demands (thinking aloud to suggest next steps and providing choices) and adjustments (linking tasks to interests, personalised learning). Neuro-affirming practice in school such as celebrating difference, ensure neurodivergent students are involved in student voice, planned down-time across the day, student passports to raise awareness and ensure consistency and reviewing policies to ensure they are neuroinclusive.	Create a coregulation plan which outlines how the student presents in different emotional states, the level of demands tolerated at each state and identified coregulatory strategies at each stage. Staff can therefore implement the plan to ensure consistency whilst being responsive to their emotional needs (increasing demands when tolerance is high and vice versa). Reduction in curriculum demands (reviewed every two weeks) in which the pupil has some time away from the most triggering aspects of school for them. Support the young person within a neuro-affirming intervention to understand their needs, how it impacts them, identify triggers for their anxieties (linked to demands) and strategies to support them to feel increasingly calm and regulated across the day.

Sensory processing

See here for more information on the Cognus website



Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Manage noisy and busy spaces Focus on important bits of information by filtering out distracting information Be ready for learning and regulate during learning with or without adult support Increase their tolerance of specific sensory information including noise, tactile, food textures, movement Engage in activities they might otherwise avoid because of sensory input	Reduce sensory information in the classroom environment e.g., reduce noise, dim lights, ensure wall displays are not overly distracting. Develop a toolbox of sensory objects and between lesson movement breaks that a young person can access independently throughout the day. Adjust the expectations on a young person for activities they find more challenging e.g., reduce the time they need to attend assembly for. Reasonable adjustments to reduce sensory information e.g., ear defenders/buds, adjustments to uniform, weighted blankets, TheraBand's, fidget objects. Provide a low arousal starter task to aid transition into the classroom e.g., quiet reading or low stakes quiz Provide natural learning breaks in the lesson. Allow pupils to use different entrances and to move through school before or after other pupils in between lessons and at the start/end of the day. Explore potential sensory causes to 'behaviour'. Provide a 'time out pass' from whole school activities.	Intervention with the young person to develop their ability to recognise and indicate their need for a sensory break. Provide a time out/break card with an agreed and rehearsed exit strategy and a space they can go e.g., a sensory room, quieter space. Advance preparation of changes to sensory environment. Planned movement breaks in between lessons. Support the young person to replace any harmful sensory behaviours with safer alternatives.

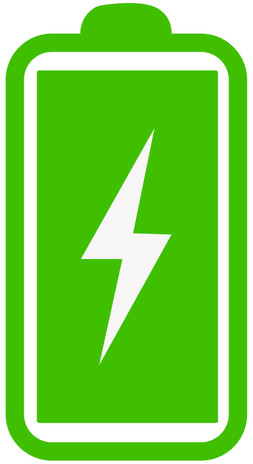
At home you can ...

Support your child to understand their regulation needs:

- Talk openly about difficult feelings and what seems to trigger these. Discuss together and practise coping and calming techniques e.g., box breathing when feeling worried about something, grounding activities when the sensory environment feels overwhelming.
- Have a plan for when situations become overwhelming e.g., using ear buds, identifying a signal that your child can use to show they need some time out.
- Find sensory aids or activities that feel regulating for them and practise using these at home.
- Recognise behaviour as a form of communication and support worries by breaking situations down into smaller steps that feel manageable, building up to bigger things over time.
- Encourage them to read the stories of other young people with Autism to get ideas about strategies they could use. See here for some ideas and here for information for young people.

Support your child to find activities that develop their sense of self and positive identity:

- Identify activities in school and outside of school that they may enjoy and encourage them to have a go, even if they're not sure.
- Allow safe socialising through online platforms and recognise that this may feel more comfortable for them.
- Talk about energy levels and help your child to identify what depletes their energy stores and what makes them feel invigorated. Help them to begin working out how to balance these.
- Support them to find spaces and places where they can make connections with people who have similar interests and/or other autistic people.



Tools to support assessment and identification of need

Cognus Autism Support Map which provides up to date information about local services

The Coventry Grid supports discrimination of difficulties pertaining to Autism and those related instead to attachment needs

The Camouflaging Autistic Traits Questionnaire (CAT-Q) is a self-report measure of social camouflaging behaviours

Useful resources

Autism Understood - A website about autism, for autistic young people

Autism Education Trust resources for school as well as pupils and families

Parent/Carer Workshops from Cognus Autism Service

Middletown Centre for Autism information about sensory processing

Family relationships and autism - a guide from the National Autistic Society

The National Autistic Society website

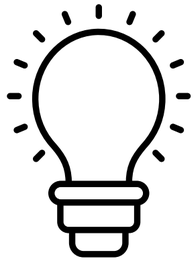
SymWriter by Widgit for pictorial presentation of information

EPIC Strategy booklet for parents of neurodivergent children

Tools such as TeachMateAI to write social stories

The Anxiety Workbook for Supporting Teens Who Learn Differently

Cognition and learning



"The core skills of great teaching are the core skills of great SEND support. By focusing on universally effective instructional strategies, teachers can feel more confident and capable in meeting the needs of all students in their classroom" (Mccrea, Barker & Goodrich, 2025)

'Support for learning difficulties may be required when young people and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation. Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs ... Specific learning difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning (DfE, 2018).

Cognition and learning needs may encompass most of the curriculum ... or may only impact on specific areas such as reading, writing, spelling and mental calculations. Cognition and learning needs generally account for difficulties in curriculum-related areas such as reading, writing and spelling, numerosity, comprehension, processing difficulties such as sequencing, inference, coherence and elaboration, working memory, short term verbal memory, other types of executive function difficulties (Whole School SEND).

The way young people view learning underpins their engagement and later success so it's important we get it right for young people from the very beginning.

Please note that the strategies listed in the following pages are strategies that schools may try, but are not an exhaustive list and should be used in line with professional judgement

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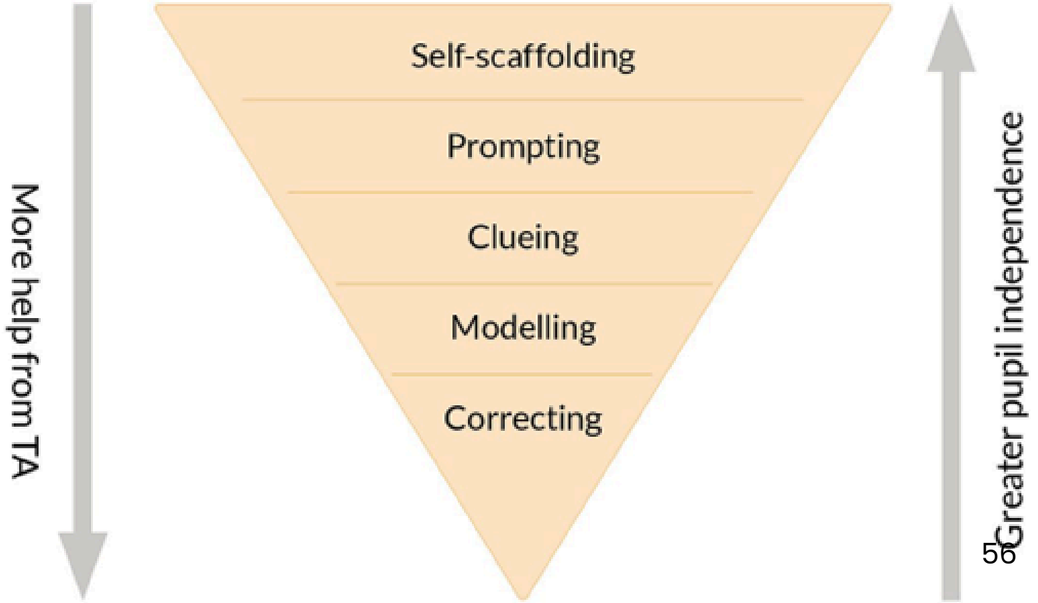
Mediation and scaffolding

Mediation refers to the way in which an adult can work with a pupil to extend their learning potential by working with them within their zone of proximal development. The zone of proximal development is the gap between what a student can do independently and what they can potentially do with the help of a "more knowledgeable other". For effective learning to take place tasks need to be pitched at a level where the learner is close to developing the new skill or knowledge, but they need some assistance and encouragement, rather than at a level where they require direct support for each element of the task and work with no independence.

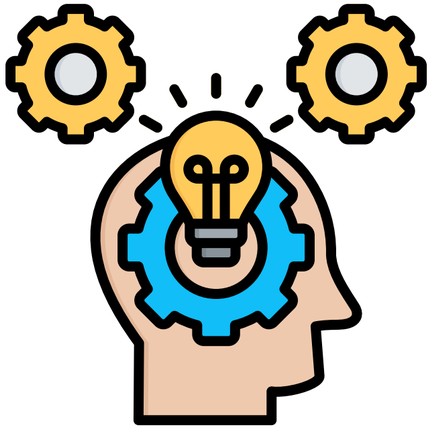
Scaffolding learning is a form or mediation, and the way in which scaffolding is approached can either increase or decrease the independent learning skills of a pupil and a variety of different skills can be mediated in the classroom by adults. Scaffolding is distinct from help. The most effective mediation focuses on enabling the pupil to more independently access the learning rather than focusing solely on task completion e.g., an adult supporting a young person to have a more successful conceptual understanding of key vocabulary trough pre-teaching so the young person can then attempt the task without needing support. An adult supporting a young person to chunk the task so that they can then work through smaller steps of learning by themselves is another example

The EEF has produced a scaffolding framework highlighting the importance of giving the least amount of support first. The lowest level of scaffolding is self-scaffolding in which a pupil would make use of a strategy to support their learning entirely independently or following a quick reminder to use a self-scaffolding strategy, only if needed would an adult provide a scaffold following this to prompt, clue, model or correct when pupils demonstrate they are unable to proceed independently. For more examples of scaffolds see here or talk to your EP to organise whole school training.



Developing metacognition skills

Evidence shows that the biggest impact on pupil learning comes from focusing on feedback and meta-cognition. This involves supporting pupils o think about their own learning more explicitly, often by teaching them specific strategies for planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning (EEF). Metacognition is the learner's ability to be aware of, reflect on, and direct their thinking, with self-regulated learners being able to apply metacognitive strategies to their learning. They demonstrate self-regulation by managing their motivation, thoughts and behaviour to set goals, monitor working, reflect and review progress. Learn more here and here.



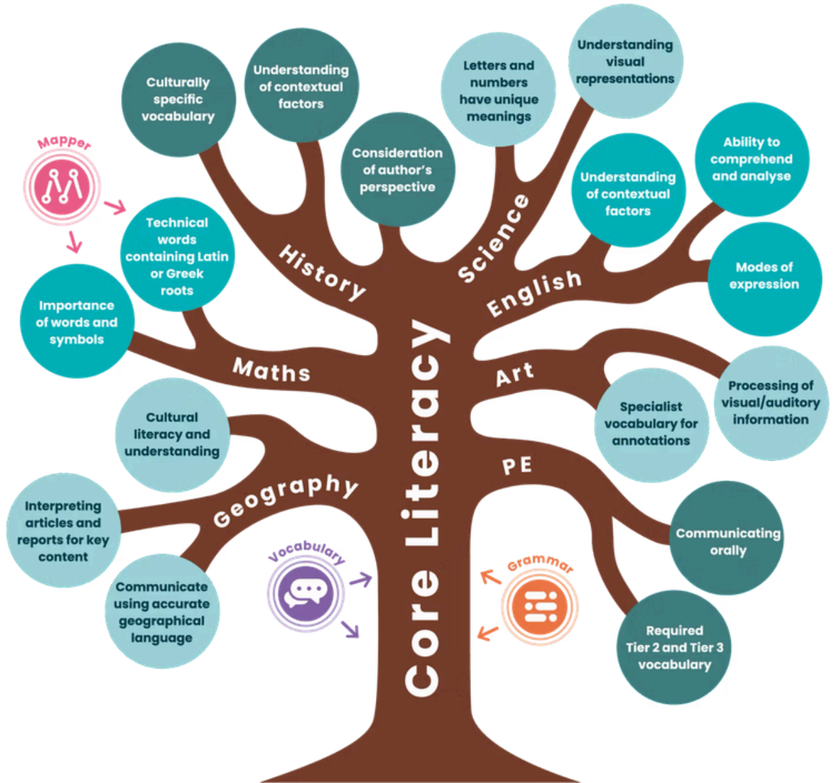
Some evidence-based ways of developing metacognition include:

- Teaching metacognitive strategies (planning, monitoring, evaluating) explicitly and referring back to skills and strategies during all lessons.
- Developing 'knowledge of self' that pupils have so that they have a good and balanced understanding of their abilities, how they learn and their emotional responses and how these can support or block their learning.
- Using questioning to support pupil independence in three stages. Planning (at the start of the task) focusing on activating prior learning, thinking about the resources required, thinking about what might be challenging. Monitoring (during the task) to encourage a pupil to think about whether they are on track, if they're still working in line with their original plan, what strategies they've previously used if they become stuck. Evaluating (after the task) to think about whether they met their goal, which strategies they used and which needed adaptation, as well as what they've learnt about themselves through the process of the task.
- A series of steps—beginning with activating prior knowledge and leading to independent practice before ending in structured reflection applied to different types of lessons across the curriculum.
- Teachers modelling metacognition through thinking aloud. For example, teachers might explain their thinking when planning an exam response or breaking down a mathematical problem, alongside promoting and planning for metacognitive talk related to lesson objectives. Another example could be a teacher modelling during a task through co-constructing a planning checklist and explain how this supports learning or verbalise self-questioning to evaluate progress.

Disciplinary literacy

According to research completed by the EEF, literacy skills are most effectively promoted when taught across the curriculum for secondary pupils. This approach is known as Disciplinary literacy and involves supporting the development of literacy skills across every subject; recognising that there are both subject-specific and cross-curricular skills. As the specialisation of a subject further increases, the emphasis on this approach to supporting literacy skills therefore increases. The essence of Disciplinary literacy is aiming to have students who can speak, read and write like a geographer, Mathematician, scientist, historian etc. Wider literacy skills across reading, writing and speaking are explicitly taught during lessons, practised and reinforced in subject specific ways.

At the whole school level implementation of a Disciplinary literacy approach may mean that every subject has its own literacy plan so that the specific difficulties pupils encounter in each curriculum area can be effectively targeted. Literacy plans would include the teaching of subject specific vocabulary, building in language development activities, teaching reading and reading comprehension skills as well as skills for writing and reviewing written work. Read more here, here and here.



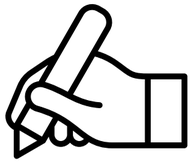
Reading

See Cognus Literacy difficulties and dyslexia guidance here and the free to access Unlocking Reading CPD launched by the DfE

Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Read unfamiliar words Read longer texts confidently and with meaning Read fluently and clearly and with a good level of comprehension Enjoy reading books which they find interesting Talk about what they have read	Implement a 'disciplinary literacy' approach in which there is explicit teaching and practise for subject specific literacy skills of speaking, reading and writing. Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject. Use of classroom learning aids including tech support such as text to speech software, reading pens, immersive reader etc. Simplified, texts. extra reading time and/or a reading buddy. Offer alternative formats of English texts e.g. graphic novels, audio books/ e-books, drama. Use repeated reading to support understanding. Model information retrieval and inference skills e.g. 'think alouds' and walk through answering of a comprehension question step-by-step. Keep worksheets/slides clearly presented and uncluttered - enlarge font to 12+ and use bold; avoid italics and underlining. Provide coloured papers, reading rulers and overlays. Long texts chunked or presented in a different format such as a visual map.	Targeted literacy (spelling, word reading, reading comprehension) intervention using a validated programme and/or based on evidence-based principles of delivery. This may be delivered as part of the core curriculum (during English lessons), or as a withdrawal intervention. See website for guidance about best practice literacy intervention. Groupings made to English classes to support pupils working below expectations. Explicit support to develop reading comprehension skills during lessons.

Writing

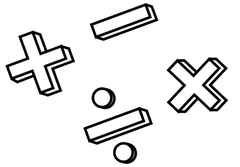
See Cognus Literacy difficulties and dyslexia guidance here



Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Produce written work that they can read back Write using full sentences and correct grammar Share their ideas in a written format Plan a written task Monitor their performance during a written task Complete extended pieces of written work	Implement a 'disciplinary literacy' approach in which there is explicit teaching and practise for subject specific literacy skills of speaking, reading and writing. Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject (focused on etymology and morphology) and teaching about how to spell them. Use of classroom learning aids including tech support such as a laptop for typing, speech to text software, speaking dictionaries, Gramarly.com, Gingerpage app, Docs, Clicker or low-tech approaches e.g., subject specific word mats, word lists coloured coded by category. Offer writing supports e.g. sentence starters, example sentences, connectives, checklist of points to include and draw pupils attention to the components of a 'good' piece of writing. Preparation at the whole class level before writing e.g., Talk for Writing style approaches. Teach planning skills e.g., the components of an essay or longer written task, and how to review and monitor work through proof reading and editing. Model these before each task. Allow pupils to present their work in different ways and provide additional time to orally discuss and rehearse written responses. Practise timed writing activities to prepare pupils for test conditions.	Targeted writing intervention using a validated programme and/or based on evidence-based principles of delivery. This may be delivered as part of the core curriculum (during English lessons), or as a withdrawal intervention, Additional oral rehearsal before writing in the classroom. Provide individual feedback regularly about how to improve writing in addition to whole class instruction and feedback. Additional modelling of the writing process to a small group in the classroom, focusing on planning, monitoring and evaluation. Approaches such as collaborative and paired writing to increase motivation for writing.

Maths

See Cognus supporting Maths difficulties guidance here



Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Complete maths reasoning questions Develop understanding of more complex numerical concepts Problem solve mathematically Develop an abstract understanding of concepts Independently identify the strategy needed to complete a maths question	Fluency tasks during lessons to increase fluency for core number skills. Access to online resources or teaching programmes which can supplement teaching at home and can be individualised e.g., Hegarty Maths. The use of experiential and practical tasks to teach concepts and purposeful use of manipulatives to make concepts concrete at the initial stage of teaching. Learning aids which can be referred back to during lessons e.g., hundred squares, number lines, times table charts. Pupils encouraged to problem solve out loud and to record, in their own words, their definitions of methods and concepts. Building concrete understanding of different mathematical concepts before moving onto abstract number tasks. Address misconceptions as they arise during whole class teaching, following up with individual pupils to ascertain that this has been embedded. Teach and model problem solving strategies using worked examples, encouraging pupils to compare and contrast different strategies. Make clear the links between facts, procedures and concepts and provide examples and non-examples of concepts.	A higher level of scaffolding for a small group of learners in the classroom. This would focus on decreasing the pace of learning, matching this to the rate of progress pupils are making, working towards mastery. Groupings made to Maths classes to support pupils working below expectations. Intervention to develop numeracy skills. One strategy/explanation taught rather than multiple.

Difficulties with learning

Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Learn new information and retain knowledge over time Recall information they have already learnt Make links between different topics and concepts Organise and sequence their thinking Make progress across all areas of the curriculum	Build in retrieval practice including rehearsal of key information e.g., pupils begin with fluency work e.g., low stakes quizzes as starter tasks. Build in reviews of previously learnt knowledge and self-testing ensuring that pupils know the importance of these activities. Chunk instructions and concepts so that pupils only move onto the next step once they're secure in or have completed the previous. Ensure pupils work independently on tasks to promote deep learning and retention of knowledge. Avoid over scaffolding or providing too much support too early in the learning process. Prioritise the teaching of Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary during all subjects. Targeted questioning to identify any misconceptions a pupil may have, followed by teaching that responds to this through addressing explicitly and re-teaching. Use of topic maps to link current learning to previous learning, looking to build incrementally on what a pupil already knows. Varied questioning techniques so that all young people can engage successfully in classroom learning. Key learning points reviewed at the end of each lesson with pupils encouraged to discuss or write their own summaries. Well managed peer support including learning partners and peer assessment.	Subject specialist intervention under the guidance of a teacher or knowledgeable member of support staff. Vocational and alternative learning opportunities as pupils move towards Key Stage 4 e.g., working towards an alternative qualification such an Entry Level rather than GCSE, King's Trust etc. (determined by the school and on the basis of the cohort of current learners) Support from an adult working with a smaller group in the classroom. Adaptations to the timetable which may include a slightly reduced number of subjects and/or adaptations to the curriculum requirements. One strategy/explanation taught rather than multiple. Sessions over the week for overlearning and reinforcement of key concepts and information, focused on developing fluency and accuracy e.g., literacy or Maths intervention. Classwork and homework tasks set at a level of facilitate consolidation of learning.

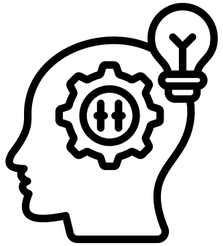
Executive functioning skills: attention, organisation, time management, processing

Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Focus their attention to learning Organise the materials they need and be prepared for different subjects Organise their thinking so that they can share their ideas Switch attention between different tasks Complete learning tasks without becoming distracted Complete learning in the allocated time	Use of technology to support planning and organisation of learning and recording of ideas e.g., reminders on phone/in planner for deadlines, timers, clocks and apps to support time management. Ensure goals and expectations are clear for tasks e.g., strategies for success, a worked example. Teach organisational strategies as well as skills of planning, monitoring and evaluation. Model the use of specific tools and return to these across lessons and between subjects (ensuring coherence across departments). Allow extra 'thinking time' to respond to questions and to complete activities. Ensure there is only one source of information to attend to at one time, when this is not possible directing pupils who struggle with split attention what they should focus on. Cueing and reinforcing listening and attention during teacher input and independent work, placing young people who need more prompting towards the front. Provide natural learning breaks in the lesson e.g., to complete a classroom job, to write an example on the board, to show the teacher work, or a whole class movement break. Tick list of tasks for pupils to independently check of and equipment lists or visuals that show what equipment the young person needs.	Intervention focused on the development of executive functioning skills, e.g. attention, self-monitoring and organisation.. A time out card which allows a young person to make use of independently to take short breaks away from the learning. Support to plan before getting started on a piece of work with check-ins to support progress through the task.

Working memory

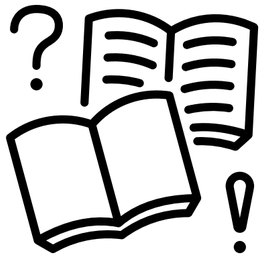
Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Follow instructions with several steps Keep track of where they are during a piece of work and misses out steps Recall information when they need to apply this knowledge of learning Focus their attention for longer periods of time	Reduce the amount of information a young person has to hold in mind e.g., chunking instructions, shortening chunks of text, revisiting previous learning. Increase the familiarity of content before independent work by drawing attention to key headings or key pieces of information. Make key information explicit, e.g., through repetition of key information or providing verbal (different tone or volume of voice) or visual emphasis (bold, underlined, use of supporting pictures etc.). Use visual memory aids for pupils to refer to, such as wall charts, posters, useful spelling cards, key terminology sheets etc. Provide print outs or laptop access so that a young person has the teaching content available to them throughout the lesson. Teach and model ways of breaking tasks down e.g., chunking a task, creating a plan/timeline for a longer project. Tick list of tasks for pupils to independently check of or visual task board. Modify the language demands of tasks to reduce overloading working memory capacity and encourage the young person to repeat back or retrieve key information. Use learning partners to support the young person if they need a task explained again or to be reminded of key information.	Noting of pupil ideas e.g. on a whiteboard ahead of independent working on task with check-ins to support progress. Have instructions and key information available so a young person can access these on a laptop. Teaching of recall strategies across the curriculum.

Metacognition and self-regulated learning



Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Work independently and to monitor their learning during tasks Understand their strengths and needs as a learner Be confident in knowing what they can do without support Know what to do when they encounter a problem or challenge	Explicitly teach and model generic study skills such as how to note take, how to plan, help-seeking, monitoring and evaluation strategies through think alouds and teachers describing their own thought processes. Teach skills across the curriculum ensuring consistent language between subjects. Regular opportunities for young people to explain their thinking to themselves and others and to reflect on their learning processes. Targeted questioning which encourages young people to think about what helps them learn and what in particular they are struggling with. Specific praise when a young person takes responsibility for their learning. Effective feedback focusing on effort and times when a young person has persevered and strategies that they have made use of which have been effective for them. Use a reward system which incorporates intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.	Sessions on supporting young people to develop a positive sense of themselves as a learner. Intervention to explicitly teach meta-cognitive skills. Support in the classroom to encourage the development of skills for independent thinking and learning. Intervention focused on teaching self-regulation skills which can be applied to learning in the classroom. Supportive conversations, and prompts in the classroom, to help a young person set goals for their learning, to monitor their progress towards these and then reflect on their performance afterwards.

At home you can …



Support homework in the most effective way by:

- Making sure your child has a working environment that enables them to focus and concentrate. If this isn't possible encourage them to go to a homework club, or similar, at school.
- Helping your child to plan and prioritise the work they have and to build their time management and organisation skills. This is useful to do with homework but also when it comes to designing a revision schedule ahead of exams. Look into apps and other low-tech ways that support organisation as these are skills for life that your child will benefit from learning as early on as possible.
- Try to avoid correcting and instead provide encourage or ask questions that encourage your child to think about what they're being asked to do in a different way.
- Praise the process i.e., what your child is doing, how hard they're trying etc., rather than just the end product.
- Encourage your child to think about what supports their learning and what doesn't. This could include helping them to recognise when they need to take a break and working out what sort of break suits them best.
- Not feeling pressured to re-teach your child lesson content. If they didn't understand something during a lesson empower them to go back and for help or to email a subject teacher.

Be positive about school! Even if you didn't enjoy particular subjects, or even school at all, be careful about what you say to your child. Whilst it's usual to share things that you found hard, and you managed these; young people can pick up on worries or dislikes simply by hearing about them from their parents. It's important that they hear positive and supporting messages about schooling from you. This is especially important when encouraging homework, which is actually one of the most effective things schools can do to promote learning.

See here for a range of subject-specific resources you could look into, although your child's school is likely to be able to send you more tailored resources.

Tools to support assessment and identification of need

A·LIST – Cognus training package to upskill support staff in delivering evidence literacy interventions

The Cognitive Ability Tests, Fourth Edition (CAT4) is an assessment of reasoning ability and likely academic potential

The Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP-2) is a measure of reading, phonological skills and processing

The New Group Reading Test (NGRT) is a standardised assessment measure of reading and comprehension

The Diagnostic Reading Analysis (DRA) to assess accuracy and comprehension of reading

The York Assessment of Reading Comprehension (YARC) is a standardised assessment used to measure reading comprehension

Progress in Reading Assessment (PiRA) are a series of tests to assess reading skills across whole classes

The Test of Nonverbal Intelligence, Fourth Edition (TONI-4) is a measure of assessing nonverbal intelligence

Access Reading Test for pupils aged 10-16 to understand mathematical skills and areas of need

Informal fluency assessment, assessing words read correctly per minute

HAST 2 a diagnostic spelling assessment

The Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting (DASH)

KeyMaths3 is a standardised assessment measure of mathematical concepts and skills

Progress in Understanding Mathematics Assessment (PUMA) are a series of termly tests that benchmark performance and track progress against national averages in maths

Access Mathematics Test for pupils aged 10-16 to understand mathematical skills and areas of need

Sandwell Numeracy and Early Numeracy Tests is an assessment of five strands of basic numeracy skills: identification, oral counting, value, object counting and language

Working Memory Rating Scale (WMRS)

Useful resources

Supporting reading in secondary school: package for all secondary school staff - YouTube

Interventions | National Literacy Trust

A·LIST – Cognus training package to upskill support staff in delivering evidence literacy interventions

SymWriter by Widgit to support writing

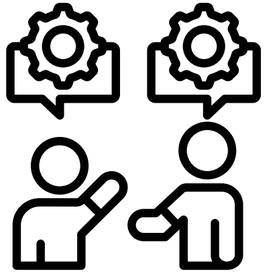
Flex Toolkit for a range of working memory strategies

EPIC Strengths and Difficulties booklet for ADHD

What Works for Pupils with Literacy Difficulties, 6th Edition

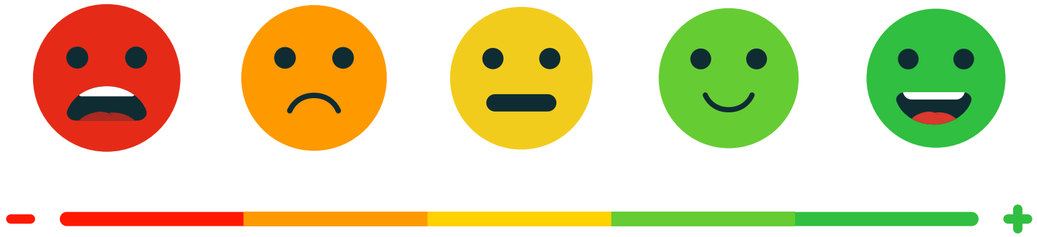
NASEN Assistive Technology miniguide

Social, Emotional and Mental Health



young people and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained (DFE).

The SEN Code of Practice (2015) no longer includes 'behaviour' as part of this category of need. The reasoning is that a young person's behaviour is perceived as a communication about the young person's state of mind and may be caused by a variety of factors such as: anxiety, sensory overload, anger, including anger about pervasive life situations or undisclosed difficulties, response to trauma or attachment difficulties, frustration due to speech and communication difficulties, response to the wrong level of challenge in lessons, grief, overwhelm, physical pain or discomfort, such as hunger, underlying mental health problems, undisclosed physical, mental or sexual abuse (Whole School SEND).



Please note that the strategies listed in the following pages are strategies that schools may try, but are not an exhaustive list and should be used in line with professional judgement

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Building regulation skills

Self-regulation is the ability to understand and manage your feelings and behaviours. A pupil with good self-regulation skills will be able to control their impulses, regulate their emotions and engage in a positive and reflective way with learning. Self-regulation skills often need to be explicitly taught and then experienced through co-regulation; an adult effectively regulating the pupil until they are able to do so independently, therefore a universal approach supplemented with targeted support for those who need it is most effective. According to the EEF sessions of up to 45 minutes twice weekly for a term are most effective in supporting social and emotional learning, with intervention more effective for secondary students with approaches that aim to develop metacognition or 'thinking' skills proving to be highly effective.

Teaching the language of emotions as well as effective calming techniques is key to developing self-regulation skills in pupils, followed by making time and space to discuss particular situations with a pupil to consider how they have applied a strategy and what they may need to do differently next time. For pupils with neurodiversity, more teaching, practice and reinforcement of regulation strategies is likely to be necessary. For all pupils, consistency of approach by all the adults who they interact with is key, therefore parent/carer workshops to reinforce school practices and policies can be really useful.

Emotion Coaching is an approach used in many Sutton schools which focuses on developing self-regulation skills 'in the moment' through effective attunement and co-regulation delivered via a four step process, ask your link Educational Psychologist if you would like more information.

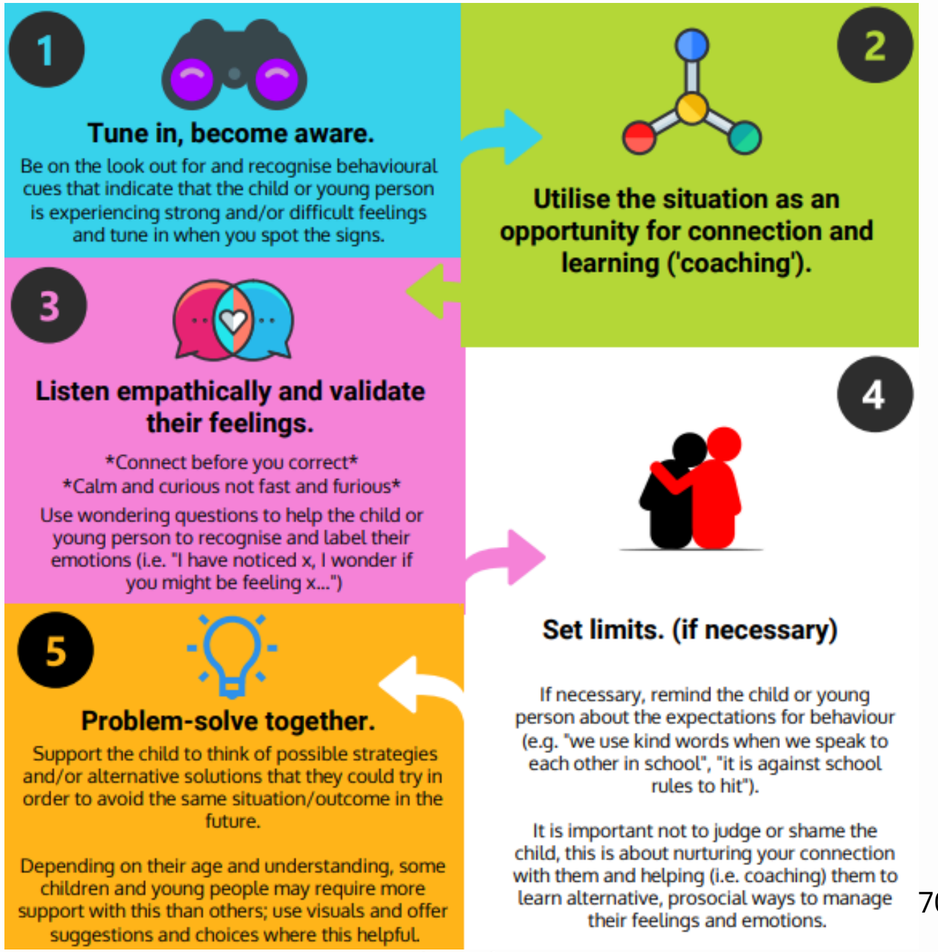


Image taken from Astrea EPS

Promoting positive behaviour

Behaviour is often communication of an unmet need, or the only strategy a pupil has available to them to indicate that there is something wrong. Young people who experience the school environment as positive and supportive are more likely to show appropriate behaviour and to respond to support. Whilst rules and boundaries may seem apparent to adults, some pupils will need these explicitly taught and to be reminded of them numerous times.

The DfE has a guidance report about behaviour in schools whilst the EEF Improving Behaviour in Schools guidance report makes the following recommendations:

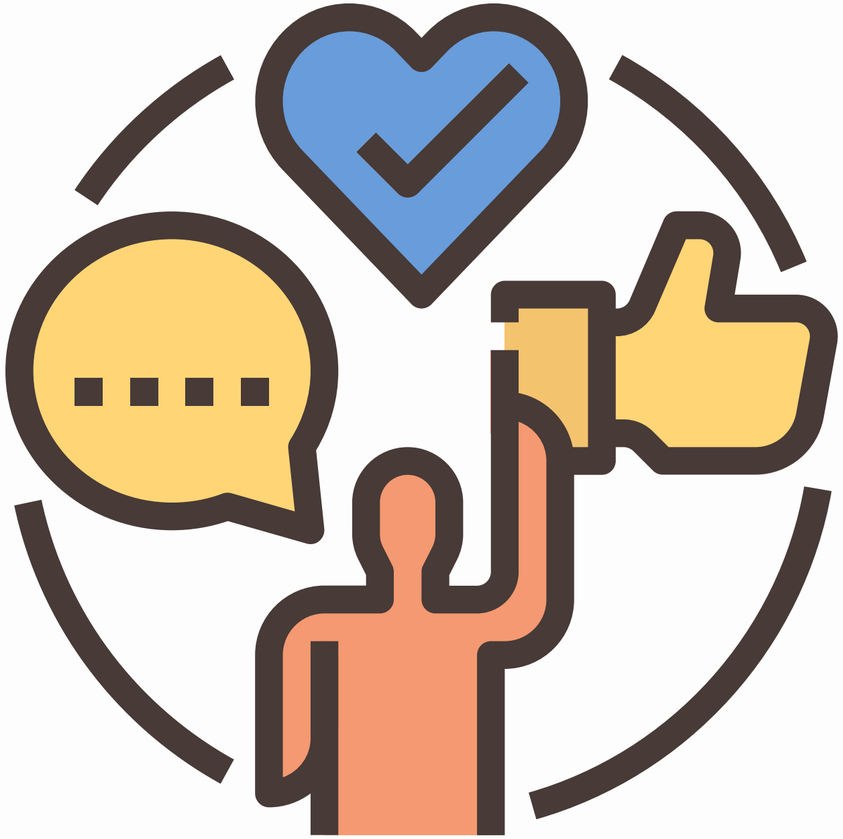
1. Know and understand your pupils and their influences – understanding a pupil's context will inform effective responses and identification of influences which can be managed by school staff and those which can't.
2. Teach learning behaviours alongside managing misbehaviour to reduce the need to manage behaviour – ensuring that pupils can access learning through adaptations to the curriculum and lesson content.
3. Use classroom management strategies to support good classroom behaviour as there are a range of strategies which are proven to reduce challenging behaviour, pupil disengagement, bullying and aggression. Approaches that enable teacher reflection around their classroom management skills and coaching to implement new approaches are effective.

4. Use simple approaches as part of your regular routine including things such as use of specific behaviour-related praise and working with parents. School leaders to focus on the consistency of application of the behaviour policy is one of the most effective approaches..
5. Use targeted approaches to meet the needs of individuals in your school because universal behaviour systems are unlikely to meet the needs of all your students and some will need the approach adapted to their individual needs. Teachers should be trained in specific strategies if supporting pupils with high behaviour needs.
6. Consistency and coherence at a whole school level are paramount although whole-school changes will usually take longer to embed than individually tailored or single-classroom approaches.

Promoting positive behaviour

Other useful approaches to implement:

- Giving students time to regulate and giving adults time to regulate if they have been on the receiving end of aggressive behaviour.
- Focus on reflection before discussion of sanctions/boundaries/consequences until you are reflecting with a pupil in a calm way at a later stage.
- Think about who is best positioned to work on restore and repair work with a pupil. It may not be the adult who was present at the time, but instead a member of pastoral staff or key adult.



- Focus on a limited number of boundaries that are well understood and implemented in an entirely consistent manner by all adults in the school.
- Provide time for adults to debrief after something has happened. This time can be used to discuss antecedents and changes made to a student's support plan if required.
- Adapting behaviour expectations and policies may be a reasonable adjustment for pupils with SEND for example reducing the length of a sanction for a pupil with ADHD and ensuring that the sanction occurs closely in time to when the incident occurred.

Emotional literacy and regulation

See here for more information on the Cognus website

Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Understand and express how they're feeling Regulate their emotions so that they do not become overwhelmed Use adaptative strategies to self-regulate Manage everyday situations because they find these stressful	Reduce expectations of communication with a young person is stressed or anxious. Reinforce an understanding of emotions and emotional regulation strategies to all pupils, facilitating discussion so that young people can gain ideas from their peers about self-regulation strategies and normalise experiencing difficult emotions during RSE or whole school mental health and emotional wellbeing events. Have visuals around school to remind young people of emotional regulation strategies and use language from Emotion Coaching to normalise feelings and to show empathy and offer guidance. Provide clear instructions on where to go and who to talk to when pupils feel uncomfortable. Reflecting on challenging behaviours and looking to identify if these are in fact attributable to underlying issues in relation to social anxiety and/or difficulties in understanding and/or communication. Monitor the energy levels of a young person and support them to make use of calming activities if they are becoming overwhelmed. Use RSE lessons to teach young people about the emotional brain and its responses as a form of psychoeducation.	Key worker/pastoral sessions to work on developing emotional awareness and regulation skills. Intervention to teach about worries and anxiety and stress.. Group sessions to implement Zones of Regulation or other emotional literacy programme. Providing a quiet space at break and lunchtimes for a young person to use if they need a quieter space to reset. Use of Comic Strip Conversations to help talk about a process different scenarios and the emotional regulation within these. Have a safe space that young people can use if they are starting to feel overwhelmed accessed by showing a time out card to their teacher.

Worries

Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Regulate feelings of stress and worry which lead to avoidance and withdrawal Put situations into perspective and think logically about likely outcomes Implement coping and calming strategies when they feel stressed	Staff to model resilience, problem-solving and regulation strategies throughout the day e.g., using language to model thinking through a situation and rationalising it. Encouragement for young people to help-seek early before feelings escalate through having information clearly available around school about sources of support and pupil advocates. Use of peers to support a young person who is more anxious during lessons e.g., partner talk, group work with a closer friend. Consider possible underlying issues which could be contributing to stress e.g., unidentified learning, social or communication needs. Involve a young person in creating their own timetable for the week which includes thought challenging statements and strategies specific to particular points that they struggle with. Ensure there are times when the young person needs to be independent if they are becoming over reliant on adult support, warning them in advance and explaining the situation to them. Postcards, emails or phone calls home to identify and praise successes.	A key person model in which young people are designated an adult who they are able to build a secure and trusted relationship with. A time-limited arrangement by which a pupil's key worker can briefly meet them at the start of the school day. Key person check-ins/check-ins from teaching staff during each lesson to remind the pupil about calming or grounding strategies they have identified. Intervention to increase a young person's understanding of language related to emotions, their triggers to experiencing a stress response, the feelings-body link, unhelpful thinking styles and strategies to regulate. Group sessions focused on exam anxiety and management techniques. Sessions with a young person to make a plan for tackling something they are worried using a Stepladder approach. Have a safe space in school that young people can use if they are starting to feel overwhelmed and need to reset.

Low mood

Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Feel happy and positive about their lives Try new things or to continue doing things they used to enjoy Notice when they have done well at something Not being overly self-critical Engage with their peers and to be included Engage in healthy routines around eating and sleeping	Staff to model resilience, problem-solving and regulation strategies throughout the day e.g., using talking about well-being strategies and healthy daily routines. Encouragement for young people to help-seek early before feelings escalate through having information clearly available around school about sources of support and pupil advocates. Find out what the young person is interested in and use things they like as well as their strengths to support resilience through building these into their timetable e.g., extra-curricular activities. Support Behavioural Activation by educating staff about this concept so that they can include elements within lesson planning. This would include activities that provide the young person with a sense of Achievement, Connection or Closeness to others or which they Enjoy. Postcards, emails or phone calls home to identify and praise successes.	Key person check-ins/check-ins from teaching staff during each lesson to remind the pupil about strategies they have identified. Targeted and specific praise to increase motivation and sense of achievement. Intervention to increase a young person's understanding of language related to emotions, their triggers to experiencing a stress response, the feelings-body link and strategies to regulate including behavioural activation, a 'happy book' (cognitive picture rehearsal). This may focus on feeling sad, not identifying positives etc. Provide structure at break and lunchtimes to facilitate the young person in completing activities which are positive for well-being. Small group activities to build friendships and positive experiences in school. Check-out sessions with a key worker at the end of the school day.

Difficulty attending school (see also Worries)

See here for a range of Cognus documents for school staff, parents/carers and young people struggling with attending school.

Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Struggle to attend school or do not frequently attend certain lessons Seek to avoid situations they find stressful Have few strategies for managing when they feel worried Have difficulties separating from parent/carers Display physical symptoms which are in fact explained by emotional responses	A soft start to the school day which involves coming in through a quieter entrance, either before or after most other young people, and participating in a regulating activity before going into lessons. Ensure that all staff are aware of the pupil's difficulties so that they can welcome them in and celebrate attendance. Warning ahead of when the pupil is attending so that learning can be adapted accordingly. Ensuring that a young person is sat with peers who will support their learning and well-being, using peer support to facilitate transitions. Strategies and support to ensure the young person is able to positively interact with peers when they are in school focused on developing their sense of belonging All adults across home and school to use consistency of approach and language when communicating with the young person about attendance at school i.e., that this is not a choice. Consider possible underlying issues which could be contributing to stress e.g., unidentified learning, sensory, social or communication needs. An agreed sign the young person can use if they need to use a quiet space or supports such as ear defenders or ear buds, they can make use of. Give the young person lots of opportunity to make choices and express preferences. Make sure to review choices they have made to show they have agency over their life. . Warning and preparation before changes, giving time for the young person to process any change.	A time-limited arrangement by which a pupil's key worker can meet them briefly at the start of the school day. Involvement of parent/carers to understand the young person's history and so that all adults can develop a shared understanding of the current situation and next steps. Looking at the timetable for the week with a young person and identifying Red, Amber, Green times and agreeing a timetable of attendance which reduces the number of Reds for a temporary period (reviewed every two weeks). Intervention such as resilience building or nurture. Connection made with young person through post cards home, letters, emails and video calls when they are not attending. Provide adult or peer support for times of the day the young person is most apprehensive about. Intervention to teach and practice coping and calming skills.

Friendship skills and developing positive relationships

Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Make friends and maintain friendships Develop their social problem solving skills Make informed decisions about friendships Understand risks from peer influences Engage in conversation with peers	Think carefully about pupil groupings in the classroom so that a young person doesn't need to select their own group but is working alongside peers who will actively seek to include them. Use a peer buddy system to ensure a young person has peers to meet during break and lunch times. Prompts and encouragement to interact with others for young people who need a confident boost to do so. Activity schedules for unstructured free time. RSE sessions focused on noticing and responding to peer pressure which includes discussion amongst young people and information shared with parents/carers to promote at home. Explicit roles for pupils during group and collaborative working to ensure that pupils who struggle with social interaction know what they are expected to contribute. Restorative conversations to mediate the repair of relationships between pupils when these have broken down.	An ongoing social skills intervention or PSHE curriculum that focuses on social skills. Collaborative learning tasks. Support young people and young people to recognise their strengths and interests and provide structured opportunities to engage with peers who have a shared interest. For example, a club or providing a designated time and space for such activities.

Adverse childhood experiences

Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Develop positive relationships with adults because they have not made them feel safe in the past Feel settled as they have experienced a lot of inconsistency and instability Feel safe because they are wired to view the world around them as threatening Engage with transitions without feeling unsettled Emotionally regulate Ask for help or seek support Feel confident and safe enough to attempt independent learning	Behaviour policy which prioritises relational approaches e.g., focus on implementing consistent and predictable routines and expectations, check-ins with young people to show you care, adopting the PACE approach (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, empathy), positive noticing, and protected time to develop rapport. Staff to be aware of their own emotional responses and prioritise a calm state when supporting a dysregulated young person. Staff to attune, label and validate feelings across the day using approaches such as Emotion Coaching. Staff to de-escalate potential signs of emotional distress through connect before correct, wondering aloud, and providing coregulatory strategies. Staff to use restorative questions when resolving conflict/rupture and ensuring consequences are logical and natural where possible. Staff to be curious about the young person's behaviour and seek to explore their lived experience which may be contributing to their current presentation. Be mindful of the shame and vulnerability associated with the presenting symptoms/behaviour.	Development of a coregulation plan for a young person who frequently becomes distressed which outlines how they present in different emotional states, triggers, and coregulatory strategies. This should be shared with all staff working with the young person. Intervention such as resilience building or nurture. Provision of an emotionally available adult in school who can provide regular check-ins and become a secure attachment figure within school. Upskilling ELSAs (or equivalent) on approaches such as Drawing and Talking, Tree of Life or therapeutic stories. A key adult to co-regulate during times of stress.

Motivation for learning

Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Overcome emotional barriers to learning Accept challenge in their learning Be resilient when they are finding something difficult Work with independence Overcome feelings of learned helplessness	Provide specific praise focused on process and effort and to the young person and talk to them about why they might find praise difficult to accept. Give take up time, clear choices and consistent routines and boundaries around learning. 'Starter' tasks which enable success before more challenging work is introduced. Tasks set to a level that enables the pupil to experience regular success, making changes to groupings or the activity if the young person seems to be struggling. Careful use of mediation focused on developing independence for learning alongside metacognition skills. See also metacognition. Task lists which a young person can check off as they go and a goal sheet which continually reinforces how much effort the young person is putting in. Use language such as "one more to go" to extend motivation close to the end of a task. Postcards, emails or phone calls home to identify and praise successes.	Flexibility in how they record their learning. Intervention such as resilience building or nurture. Looking at the timetable for the week with a young person and identifying Red, Amber, Green times and agreeing a timetable of attendance which reduces the number of Reds for a temporary period (reviewed every two weeks). Agree on task expectations at the start of a task and review these at the end. Learning mentor sessions to ensure the young person feels more prepared for lessons.

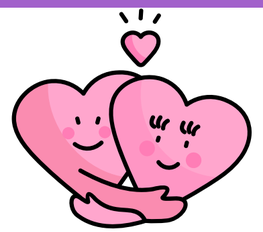
Following rules and boundaries

Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Regulate and be ready for learning Accept rules and hierarchies Feel a sense of belonging and connectedness to school Reflect on times when they have upset others Make changes to how they think about situations and respond	A consistent message from all staff that they want the young person in class but to be safe. Implementation of whole school practices which support a relational approach and attuned, empathic responses such as Emotion Coaching and restorative approaches. Adults to see themselves as stress regulators not behaviour managers. Consideration of what underlying needs a young person has and/or what their behaviour is seeking to communicate and plan for other ways they can get their needs met or communicate more appropriately. Apply reasonable adjustments to the behaviour policy. Remind a young person about how they should be behaving or a strategy they could use, using positive, clear language. Make sure they know what has gone wrong, communicating with them in a way that does not instil a sense of shame. Tactical ignoring of small misdemeanours, aiming to reduce negative attention, and high levels of praise for small attempts the young person makes to improve always enforcing a 'new day, fresh start' approach. Reminders of rules, boundaries and social expectations reinforced with individual conversations. Aiming to be proactive and diverting a young person before their behaviour escalates or putting in a strategy to minimise the escalation. Make use of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and motivators. Consider the impact of suspensions e.g. excluding a pupil can reinforce their maladaptive behaviours that are unsupportive of their learning and healthy social relationships, increasing isolation and harming their emotional well-being.	Intervention to help a young person understand how others may think and feel in situations using real life examples, role play and different scenarios. Time after something has happened in which the young person is supported to repair their relationships with pupils or staff. Create a positive behaviour plan using the young person's views and ideas, planning for things that appear to be triggers identified through observation and analysis e.g., ABCC, de-escalation and regulation strategies. Check-ins/mentoring from key adults throughout the day. A change of face when a young person has become dysregulated and is no longer responding to the adults around them. Risk assessment planning (if needed).

Supporting worries and anxieties

Feelings of worry are totally normal, and in some situations feeling a bit worried or anxious is actually helpful. However when children worry about lots of things or experience very intense worry about things they really don't need to worry about this can be problematic. Becoming more easily worried can be genetic in nature, but things that happen to the child can also play a part. Worries can develop for many different reasons, including life experiences, temperament, stressful events, and the ways children make sense of situations around them. Children often look to trusted adults for cues about how to respond when something feels difficult or uncertain. One of the most helpful things adults can do is model calm coping strategies and show that worries can be managed, even when situations feel challenging.

If you're an anxious parent, rather than try and hide this from child, share with them (not going into too much detail) some of the things you worry about but the ways that you manage these worries. Spend time problem-solving worries which could include trying to rationalise them as well as working on calming and grounding strategies your child could use if they start to feel worried. More useful resources: YoungMinds



Try to avoid reassuring your child that something won't happen because whilst reassurance can feel helpful in the moment, children often benefit most from support that helps them understand their worries and develop confidence in their ability to cope with uncertainty.

Supporting children to face worries gradually can help build confidence over time

Most worries can be overcome one step at a time and all worries can only be overcome by facing them head on. This means that even if your child is distressed by something it will be more helpful to try and break that down into a smaller, less worrisome event rather than to avoid it entirely. Avoiding things is a short-term quick fix but then only makes the worry bigger in the longer-term.

A five step plan, based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), which you could work on with your child at home would be as follows:

- **Step 1:** Learning to spot your child's anxious thoughts – what is the unhelpful way of thinking that is making them worry about a situation
- **Step 2:** Helping your child to evaluate the thought (is it helpful or not) and consider other points of view
- **Step 3**: Encourage independence and 'having a go', using strategies to manage anxious feelings at the same time
- **Step 4**: Developing a step by step plan with your child which breaks down the end goal into smaller steps which can be completed one at a time
- **Step 5**: Problem solving about how the plan went and what needs to be changed for next time

Tools to support assessment and identification of need

The Boxall Profile is an assessment of social, emotional and behavioural development that can be used for whole school and individual assessment

The Coventry Grid supports discrimination of difficulties pertaining to Autism and those related instead to attachment needs

Observing Children with Attachment Difficulties in School - a tool for Identifying and Supporting Emotional and Social Difficulties in Children Aged 5-11

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire is a behavioural screening questionnaire for 2-17 years comprising pupil, teacher and parent versions

Spence Anxiety Scale – assessment of the six anxiety domains comprising parent, child, pre-school scales

Emotional Literacy – assessment of ability to understand and express feeling for 7-16 years

The Mood and Feelings Questionnaire (MFQ) is a widely used self-report measure for assessing depressive symptoms in children and young adults

Special Needs Assessment Profile (Behaviour) (SNAP-B) is an online diagnostic assessment that profiles 17 Social and Emotional Behaviour Difficulties

Thrive Approach – web-based tool to assess and support emotional and social development

Resiliency Scales for Children & Adolescents is a tool to profile personal strengths, as well as vulnerability in teens and children

SNAP-B is an online diagnostic tool that identifies specific behavioural difficulties

Anna Freud 'Index of Instruments' features a range of different measures and questionnaires

The School Refusal Assessment Scale (SRAS-R) is **a tool used to identify the reasons behind a child's avoidance of school**

The Revised Child Anxiety and Depression Scale (RCADS) is a 47-item, self-report questionnaire

The CORE-10 is a 10-item questionnaire to monitor mental health and well-being

The WEMWBS is **a 14-item scale of positively worded statements covering feeling and functioning aspects of mental wellbeing**

The Extreme Demand Avoidance Questionnaire for Adults (EDA-QA) is a questionnaire that measures PDA traits

Useful resources

EEF | Personal Social and Emotional Development guidance

ABC Chart with guidance for monitoring and understanding escalations

Sutton Education Wellbeing Service webinars for staff and parent/carers

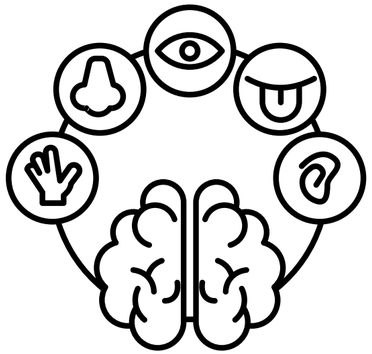
Attachment, Regulation and Competency (ARC) framework and guidance

DfE Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools guidance

The School Wellbeing Cards reflect common risk and protective factors that underpin school connectedness, belonging and wellbeing

Observing Children with Attachment Difficulties in School - a tool for Identifying and Supporting Emotional and Social Difficulties in Children Aged 11-16

Physical and/or sensory



young people and young people may have a physical disability which affects their learning or access to learning. Some may also have issues with processing sensory information (such as sight, hearing sound, touch) ... 'Some young people and young people require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time (DfE).

Physical and sensory needs cover a wide range of medical conditions. Some young people with physical disabilities may be very cognitively able so the levels of support must be tailored to a person-centred needs analysis of each young person's needs and preferences, taking into account the views of young people and their families (Whole School SEND)

Please note that the strategies listed in the following pages are strategies that schools may try, but are not an exhaustive list and should be used in line with professional judgement

Physical and/or sensory – Contents

Functional use of body for learning 85

Independence skills for learning 86

Regulation and engagement in learning 87

Deafness 88

Visual impairment (VI) 89

Multi-sensory impairment (MSI) 90

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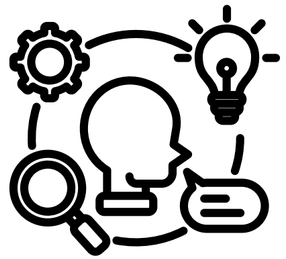
Functional use of body for learning

See here for more information on the Cognus website for fine motor skills and gross motor skills

Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Be independent with self-care tasks in line with peers Use hands together in a coordinated way to carry out everyday tasks Demonstrate adequate hand strength and grips for functional tasks Engage with structured physical activities, games or equipment Engage in gross motor activities alongside peers	Offer tools such as writing slopes or alternative seating options to support posture handwriting. Offer short breaks during extended tasks to reduce fatigue and maintain focus. Encourage naturally occurring/ structured movement breaks throughout the day. Encourage practical learning activities involving tool use or tech-free tasks that require hands working together. Use short preparatory activities to physically prepare body and hand muscles for writing. Encourage students to try different pens, pencils, and grips to find what works best for them—this can support comfort, legibility, and stamina. Accommodate Left-Handed Writers to ensure left-handed students have suitable seating arrangements to avoid elbow clashes and paper placement and easy access to left-handed tools if needed. Differentiate physical and practical activities in PE, science, technology, and other subjects to ensure accessibility for all. Ensuring the school environment and building are accessible to all students.	Intervention to teach new motor skills. Any targeted intervention is likely to take place outside of lesson time e.g., during tutor or break time or before/after school. Learning breaks to reduce fatigue and extra time to complete tasks. Use of assistive technology to support a pupil in sharing their ideas e.g., speech to text software. Staff trained in moving and handling. Make specific adaptations to the environment in order to meet individual young people and young people's accessibility needs and ability to be independent from a physical perspective

Independence skills for learning

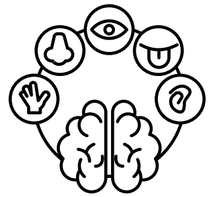
See here for more information on the Cognus website



Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Independence with self-care activities, travelling and community skills Follow and manage the day/weekly routine Use every day tools and materials within functional activities independently Sequence everyday tasks in a logical order Organise personal belongings required for learning activities	Visual schedules and task lists to support routines in school. Support organisation of personal belongings required for activities i.e. personal organisers, calendars, phone reminders, diaries, visual timetable or lists, digital watch. Assistive technology or devices to support safety and independence i.e. a cooking timer, a perching stool. RSE lessons or tutor time used to facilitate discussions amongst pupils about safety in the community and independent travel. Useful resources can be found here via the Cognus Limited website: click here	Intervention to teach skills. Any targeted intervention is likely to take place outside of lesson time e.g., during tutor or break time or before/after school. Establish specific functional self-help and independence SMART goals with the young people and plan targeted intervention in school and at home in line with this. Curriculum based learning of life skills through King's Trust/ ASDAN. Referral to travel training providers.

Regulation and engagement in learning

See here for more information on the Cognus website



Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Manage noisy and busy spaces in school Focus on important bits of information Filter out distracting information Be ready for learning and to self-regulate during learning Regulate their sensory processing systems Increase their tolerance of specific sensory information including noise, tactile, food textures, movement Engage in activities they might otherwise avoid because of sensory input	Reduce sensory information in the classroom environment e.g., reduce noise, dim lights, ensure wall displays are not overly distracting. Develop a toolbox of sensory objects and between lesson movement breaks that a young person can access independently throughout the day. Adjust the expectations on a young person for activities they find more challenging e.g., reduce the time they need to attend assembly for. Reasonable adjustments to reduce sensory information e.g., ear defenders/buds, adjustments to uniform, weighted tools, TheraBand's, fidget objects. Provide a low arousal starter task to aid transition into the classroom e.g., quiet reading or low stakes quiz Provide natural learning breaks in the lesson. Allow pupils to use different entrances and to move through school before or after other pupils in between lessons and at the start/end of the day. Explore potential sensory causes to 'behaviour'. Provide a 'time out pass' from whole school activities.	A time out card which a young person can make use of independently to take short breaks away from the learning. Intervention to develop the ability to recognise and indicate their need for a sensory break. Talk to the young person or young person to understand their sensory differences and create a system together to support them in communicating how they are feeling and in choosing a range of self-regulating activities. Planned movement breaks in between lessons. Support the young person to replace any harmful sensory behaviours with safer alternatives.

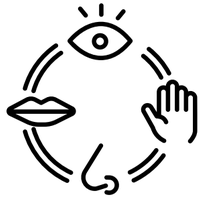
Deafness

Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Develop expressive and receptive language skills Develop an alternative communication method Understand social cues, turn-taking, and reciprocal interaction skills	All staff and supply staff, visiting speakers, sports, drama groups etc. are informed of young person's deafness/MSI needs at the planning stage of activities. Use of audiological equipment in the classroom. Modifying language and scaffolding of subject-specific vocabulary. Differentiation in terms of approach (i.e., multi-sensory, related to the young person's everyday experience, ICT etc.) and pace (i.e., extra time for responses to questions, contributing to class discussions and activities). Cueing and reinforcing young people's listening/attention Management of turn taking in classroom discussions, repetition of key points. Checking understanding and reinforcing by repetition, rephrasing, explanation/ demonstration Visual aids to support understanding including objects, pictures, gesture, signs, symbols, models, examples, ICT, demonstrations, use of subtitles or transcripts, visual/written instructions for homework etc. Physical environment: background noise is reduced, good room acoustics and seating plan is used to optimise listening and visual access to lip patterns.	Differentiation and adaptation to teaching materials and content in line with personalised educational advice supplied by HaVES team. Training from the HaVES Team around assistive listening devices and other strategies for supporting students with deafness Sufficient curriculum time allocated to classroom staff for adaptation to teaching and learning. Planning shared with HaVES team to enable resources to be obtained/ modified in time for the lesson, differentiation both in quantity and level of work, delivery method through ICT, sign, lip reading, modified worksheets, practical activities. Support for inclusion with extra-curricular activities, modified homework resources and newsletters.

Vision impairment (VI)

Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Enhance their touch sensitivity and discrimination Develop listening and sound localization skills Develop literacy skills Understand their body position and movement in space Interpret tone of voice, body language, and social cues. Move around with independence	All staff and supply staff, visiting speakers, sports, drama groups etc. are informed of young person's VI/MSI needs at the planning stage of activities. Careful consideration of accessibility of learning materials in terms of readability, density of text, size and choice of font, layout, coloured paper, appropriate use of illustrations, clutter free diagrams, all modified resources onto A4 paper only. Access to 3D objects in teaching concepts includes all students and aids understanding of clear print or tactile images. Support for alternative ways of recording work. This may include provision of recommended specialist assistive technology such as iPad/ tablet/ laptop and specialist software. e.g., screen sharing packages. Provision of texts in electronic format ensures students can access them in their preferred format, including Braille. Provision of consumables, e.g., thicker, wider-lined specialist paper and exercise books, matt (not gloss) laminate. Appropriate black fibre-tipped pens/ soft 2B/4B pencils, exemption from learning a cursive script. Use of a writing slope and/or reading stand. Teacher verbalising work as they write on the board, recorded in black ink, plain font style on a white uncluttered background. Stating students' names before questions or instructions, to help link names to voices and anticipate questions. Seating at close proximity to interactive white board/learning facilitator/ point of learning. Adaptation of teaching and learning environment to take account of sources of light and sound, glare and reverberation, visual and auditory clutter and contrast. Keep a clear, tidy classroom with good organisation and labelling of resources. Visual fatigue rest breaks built into the day.	Adaptation of teaching materials, following advice from qualified teacher for vision impairment (QTVI), for the individual student. This may be in modified large print (MLP), audio, or other formats. Consideration of teaching of Braille and tactile skills to students who cannot easily access print larger than size 36/48 Regular liaison with QTVI to support student and school staff in learning assistive technology skills, including touch-typing and shortcut keystrokes, mirroring the interactive whiteboard, and accessing electronic texts via apps such as EasyReader or Libby. Support to develop the young person's personal understanding of their vision needs and develop their confidence and independence into adulthood. Focus on understanding their likely access needs in Higher/Further Education, sources of support, rights and responsibilities, with bespoke careers advice. Access to expert counselling and support for students whose vision may change. Intervention to consolidate social interaction skills, with explicit teaching of body position, facial expression, 'filler' sounds and phrases, and techniques for showing attention to the speaker, and extending conversation.

Multi-sensory impairment (MSI)



Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Develop communication and interaction skills Understand the world around them and learn daily routines Make their choices and preferences known Move around with independence	All staff and supply staff, visiting speakers, sport, drama groups etc. are informed of young person's MSI visual and auditory needs at the planning stage of activities. A range of multi-sensory tasks, teaching styles and support for the alternative ways of recording work. Seating at close proximity to interactive white board/learning facilitator/ point of learning. Provision of recommended generic specialist assistive technology such as: iPad/ tablet/ laptop/ eReader/ scanner and specialist software. e.g., screen sharing packages and magnification. Clear classroom routines supported by cues, e.g., objects of reference, signs, symbols, gestures, signing to support language, photographs, visual timetables. Careful consideration of accessibility of learning materials in terms of readability, density of text, size and choice of font, layout, overlays, coloured paper, appropriate use of illustrations, clutter free diagrams, all modified resources onto A4 paper only. Provision of consumables, e.g., specialist paper, matt laminates. Appropriate black fibre tipped pens/ dark leaded pencils, exemption from learning a cursive script. Use of a sloping desk or board. Teacher verbalising work on the board, recorded in black ink, plain font style on a white uncluttered background. Adaptation of teaching and learning environment to take account of sources of light and sound, glare and reverberation, visual and auditory clutter and contrast, as well as the subtleties of the tactile environment. Keep a clear, tidy classroom with good organisation and labelling of resources. Visual fatigue rest breaks built into the school day.	Differentiation and adaptation to teaching materials and content in line with personalised educational advice supplied by HaVES team/MSI Qualified Teacher. Sufficient curriculum time allocated to classroom staff for adaptation to teaching and learning Planning shared with HaVES team to enable resources to be obtained/ modified in time for the lesson, differentiation both in quantity and level of work, delivery method through ICT, sign, lip reading, modified worksheets, practical activities. Support for inclusion with extra-curricular activities, modified homework resources and newsletters.

Physical disability

Young people who need support to	Strategies that may help (universal support)	Examples of targeted support
Move independently and safely around the school environment Make use of equipment or have their own equipment provided Co-ordinate motor movements for learning tasks	Reasonable adjustments to the school environment and building adaptations including accessible toilets, height adjustable furniture, grab bars, door handles, lifts, etc. Well-organised classrooms with clear pathways. Optimal seating position including correct size furniture and additional resources such as seating wedges and writing slopes, and positioning in relation to the teacher/teaching focus. Opportunities to be in different physical positions throughout the day e.g. sitting and standing positions as appropriate. Adapting and modifying classroom tasks that require sustained and/or precise fine and/or gross motor skills. The use of assistive technology as well as low-tech aids or equipment (basic word processors, communication passport). Alternative pens/pencils/equipment-grips and enlarged lined paper/frames. Careful consideration of timetabling and location of rooms. Rest breaks, to take account of fatigue, built in to the day and extra time for completion of tasks. Differentiation for P.E and all movement based learning, practical activities, use of equipment as appropriate.	Accessibility planning to include a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan. Some additional adult support for accessing and demonstrating learning within the classroom. Monitoring to ensure safe movement in the classroom and around the school. Staff trained in manual handling and position changes, e.g., from chair to standing frame, etc. Differentiation for P.E and all movement based learning, practical activities, use of equipment as appropriate.

Tools to support assessment and identification of need

Cognus HaVES Team - information about the team and how to access support

Specialist assessments for deaf children and young people, NDCS information

Developmental Coordination Disorder Questionnaire (DCDQ) is a brief parent questionnaire designed to screen for coordination disorders in children, aged 5 to 15 years

Cognus Therapy Screeners – a screener and referral form for children and young people with or without an EHCP for speech and language therapy and occupational therapy

Before making a referral into the Occupational Therapy Service it is advised that you complete a screener to gain a sense of the level of the child's needs and strategies or interventions which can be used first.

Useful resources

Cognus Therapies Graduated Response for more information about universal, targeted and specialist provisions

National Handwriting Association guidance

Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school guidance

National Deaf Children's Society website which includes advice, support and access to resources

Guidance about backwards chaining

National Deaf Children's Society - resources and documents

'Here to learn' - videos by National Deaf Children's Society to support classroom and curriculum support

Royal National Institute of Blind People - teaching and learning guidance

Royal National Institute of Blind People - teaching and learning guidance

National Sensory Impairment Partnership - resources and documents

PD Net: A network for those supporting learners with physical disability - resources and documents

BSL advice videos - Deaf Zone

British Sign Language resources and training

Let's Sign resources

NHS strategies and advice for hypermobility

Shine FAQs about physical disability and educational settings

Activity Alliance - inclusive activity training

Children with medical needs NASEN minigude

Other useful links

Sutton Local Offer – information for parents. This website will explain Sutton's local offer for children with SEND

Sutton Health and Care (Health Visitors, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, dietetics, physiotherapy)

National Children's Bureau (NCB) - Inclusion focused research and guidance

The Sutton Trust-EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit. An accessible summary of educational research which provides guidance for schools and settings on how to use their resources to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils

What Works in SEND - Database for effective practice, research and evaluation, evidence and implementation guidance

NASEN, Whole School SEND resources

NASEN, Whole School SEND teacher handbook

Whole School SEND Online SEND CPD Units Dashboard

EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit

EEF guidance on the deployment of Teaching Assistants

Sutton's Local Offer - Preparing for Adulthood section for information on Inclusion such as leisure and things to do, national groups/opportunities, friends and relationships, looking after and/or owning a pet and further education: Preparing for Adulthood for Young People with SEND | Sutton Information Hub

The National Development Team for Inclusion has many resources available to support Independent Living: Preparing for Adulthood: Independent Living - NDTi

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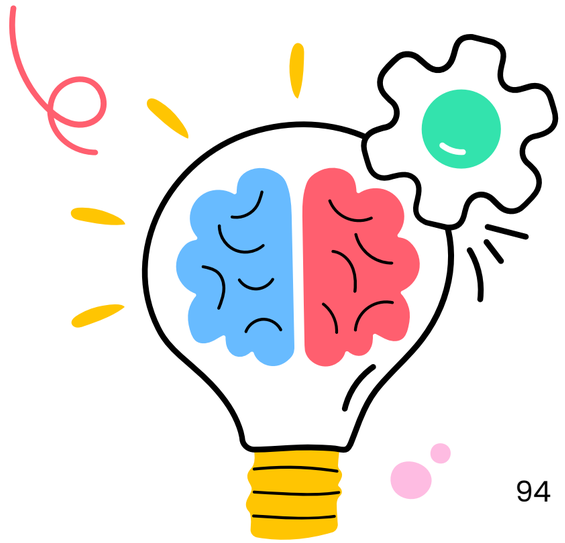

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