

Strategies Guide

Expected good class practice for pupils with needs presenting in the areas of:

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Expected good class practice to support pupils with...

Attention and listening difficulties

Good quality first teaching	✓ Make sure you have the pupil’s full attention – say their name and gain eye contact. ✓ Have the pupil placed at the front of the class (or carpet) facing the direction in which you want them to focus. ✓ Cue the pupil into listening by using their name at the beginning of your instruction, sentence or question. ✓ Give the pupil time to process what you have said before giving another instruction, or more information. ✓ Give regular praise to reinforce and encourage good listening and learning behaviour. (Positive redirection – telling them what to do rather than what not to). Use a visual to support this. ✓ Use visual timers to promote attention for a set amount of time. ✓ Use peer support (without this always being the same young person) and consider seating carefully. ✓ Develop attention skills in a group situation by teaching good rules of listening: look towards the speaker, good sitting, not interrupting. Pass an object around the group to show who is speaking. ✓ Ensure your instructions are short and clear. Ask the pupil to repeat instructions/tasks back to you ensuring they have clearly understood. ✓ Instructions and tasks should be clear, brief, concise and in the correct order where possible. Some pupils may benefit from them being written down and broken into simple steps. ✓ Use visual support (e.g. gesture, signs, pictures) when giving information or instructions.
Good quality first teaching combined with good quality SEN Support	✓ Use multi–sensory teaching techniques that are visual, auditory and tactile. Support abstract concepts with concrete apparatus. ✓ Use of regular short breaks/natural movement breaks. ✓ Use reward systems (e.g. stickers). ✓ Provide visual or written reminders for organising materials and equipment. Use a task plan/task management board. ✓ Be very specific about how much work you expect to be completed within a set time frame. ✓ Prompt the child with key words or information to listen out for. This could be supplied in visual form. ✓ Aid concentration through use of fiddle toys, wobble cushion etc. Use of sensory support to aid concentration – calming, alerting activities.



Social communication difficulties

Good quality first teaching	✓ Use literal language; avoid idioms, sarcasm and figures of speech. ✓ Collect the pupil’s voice: what are their special interests/motivators? ✓ Use visual aids as much as possible; objects, pictures, symbols to aid understanding. Be clear about what it is you want from the pupil and not about what you don’t want! ✓ Use visual timetables for daily routines. ✓ Speak to parents/carers. Remember that how a child represents in school is not always indicative of how the child is coping. Signs of anxiety of challenging behaviours may only be evident at home. ✓ Contact books: develop a collaborative relationship with the parents/ carers. Working together is the most positive and beneficial way of supporting the pupil across both settings. ✓ Use positive re-direction rather than negative: ‘Put the pens on the table’ rather than ‘Don’t throw the pens.’ ✓ Praise the pupil when they show a desired behaviour e.g. “good listening, well done” likewise make sure you let them know what you are pleased with.
Good quality first teaching combined with good quality SEN Support	✓ Develop understanding of cause and effect through activities where the pupil has to consider ‘what if?’ such as comic strips or social stories. ✓ Teach the pupil social skills and give opportunities to practice these skills, with adult support, in a small group setting. ✓ Use role play to teach the pupil how to cope with different social situations. ✓ Use multi–sensory teaching techniques that are visual, auditory and tactile. Support abstract concepts with concrete apparatus. ✓ Use of self-regulation strategies such as traffic light systems or the 5-point scale. ✓ Use lunch clubs or adult supervised structured lunch times for those children who struggle during unstructured times. ✓ Use ‘first/then’ or choices board.

Difficulties understanding language

Good quality first teaching	✓ Ensure that you have the pupil’s full auditory and visual attention before talking to them. ✓ Simplify – break your request/instruction down into parts or make it simpler by giving 1 or 2 steps. Try to limit non-essential information as this may overload the pupil. ✓ Emphasise key words when giving information (e.g. get your English book and the blue pen). ✓ Give pupils extra time to process what you have said. ✓ Use concrete, familiar vocabulary and speak clearly and not too quickly. ✓ Give instructions before an activity, not during it. ✓ Provide repetitions – exact repetitions. ✓ Ask yes/no questions or give alternatives rather than asking open questions. ✓ Revise and summarise stories and information. ✓ Check a pupil’s understanding by asking them to repeat back an instruction and support pupils to recognise when they have not understood. ✓ Support pupils to recognise when they have not understood. Agree a strategy for them to ask for help or clarification. Provide praise when they do this independently. ✓ Focus on the feature – help your pupil focus on the feature they need to look at to be able to understand your question (e.g. if you are asking how two items are alike, you can draw their attention to the relevant similarity – colour/size etc). ✓ Use visual timetables to support daily routines.
Good quality first teaching combined with good quality SEN Support	✓ Pre-teach subject specific vocabulary PRIOR to the lesson. ✓ Use games that support the development of non-verbal reasoning skills. This could include activities involving sequencing and predicting patterns; matching or ordering objects in relation to certain characteristics such as size, colour, shape. ✓ Use multi-sensory teaching techniques that are visual, auditory and tactile. ✓ Use visual aids as much as possible; objects, pictures, symbols, gestures, signing, PECS to aid understanding. ✓ Ensure the vocabulary you use is in line with the student’s language level.

In association with:

Children’s Speech and Language Therapy Service and The Joint Communication Team



Difficulties in using language

Good quality first teaching	✓ Provide a good language model, keeping your language clear and concise. Repeat what pupils have said emphasising the correct word order and grammar. ✓ Give the pupil sufficient time to process what has been said and to organise their response. ✓ Provide students with a simple structure to help them organise their language e.g. first, then, next. ✓ Provide visual prompts alongside key vocabulary to support the re-telling of events. ✓ To encourage participation in a group, ask questions which give alternatives (e.g. 'was Tom pleased or unhappy?'). This allows pupils to become more involved in the discussion. ✓ Give pupils plenty of time to say what they mean. ✓ Provide opportunities for language use (e.g. re-telling a story or describing a recent activity). ✓ Encourage pupils to organise ideas verbally before writing them down. A talking tin or other voice recording apps could be provided to support with this. ✓ Differentiate work to reflect the pupil's language and communication profile. ✓ Scaffolding – start at a level where the child is confident and then gradually stretch them.
Good quality first teaching combined with good quality SEN Support	✓ Extend the pupil's sentences by adding something extra (e.g. for younger children: if the pupil says 'there's a bus', you could say 'there's a big, red bus'. For older children: (if the pupil says 'the man is digging', you could say 'the man is digging and the woman is planting'). ✓ Encourage students to use alternative means of communicating, drawing, PECs, gestures, scribing, typing. ✓ Use of mind maps to organise thoughts. ✓ Trial the use of specific approaches to further support the content and structure of language these may include 'Colourful Semantics' or 'Shape Coding' (see school Speech and Language Therapist). ✓ Ensure speech and language care plan recommendations are put into place.

Difficulties in word finding and vocabulary

Good quality first teaching	✓ If you know what the word is, provide alternatives. ✓ Cue pupils by giving them the first sound of the word (e.g. it's a 'lllll'...) ✓ Ask pupils questions about the word (e.g. 'Where do you find it? What do you use it for?'). ✓ Encourage pupils to rehearse the word once it has been retrieved. ✓ Encourage pupils to use the word in a sentence. ✓ Teach and use the word in a range of different contexts. Provide multiple exposures to new words. ✓ When teaching new words, use a word web to discuss phonological (e.g. first sound) and meaning (e.g. location and function) features. ✓ When learning new words, try to make as many associations with the new word as possible. Teach related words and group new words into categories. ✓ Support pupils to reflect on their own word learning. ✓ Model correct production of sounds. ✓ If the child can make the sound, provide a choice for correction (e.g. 'is it a tup or a cup?'). and praise all attempts at trying to self-correct.
Good quality first teaching combined with good quality SEN Support	✓ Pre-teach important vocabulary. ✓ Work on pupils' phonological awareness (e.g. encouraging pupils to tap out syllables, for example, 'e-le-phant'; identifying the first and last sound in words). ✓ Supporting sound development through phonics and reading tasks. You may want to use the 'Letters and Sounds' resource.

Difficulties with cognition and learning

Good quality first teaching	✓ Be aware of the pupil’s starting point so that expected process can be measured accurately. ✓ Pupils should be taught to the curriculum year they are able to access not their chronological age. ✓ All class work and homework should be differentiated across all subjects to enable the pupil to access the full curriculum. ✓ Use of modelling to aid understanding. ✓ Routinely give the opportunity of alternatives to written recording. ✓ Key vocabulary is displayed with appropriate visuals. ✓ Use visual timers to promote attention for a set amount of time. ✓ Be very specific about how much work you expect to be completed within a set time frame.
Good quality first teaching combined with good quality SEN Support	✓ Regular use of rest breaks. ✓ Use of reader, scribe or talking tins or other voice recording apps. ✓ Use of task board: tasks are broken down into small manageable steps. These steps are shown explicitly. ✓ Pre-teaching: help prepare the pupil by pre-teaching key words and concepts PRIOR to lessons. ✓ Provide written, visual and recorded support. Use images and break long chunks of text up. When reading is a challenge, it can be helpful for a child to have recorded materials and books to listen to. ✓ Extra time for processing and completing work, not just in school but homework too. Could parents scribe homework or it be recorded on a talking tin or other voice recording app? ✓ Provide opportunity for touch typing learning: https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/articles/z3c6tfr

Anxiety and needs that challenge behaviours

Good quality first teaching	✓ Understand that behaviour is a method of communication. What is the pupil trying to communicate? Can you identify the triggers? ✓ Instructions need to be clear and explicit. Make expectations very clear. ✓ Buddy/peer mentoring systems. ✓ Giving positions of responsibility to promote positive self-esteem. ✓ Regular contact with home to establish patterns of behaviour in other environments as well as strategies being tried. ✓ Speak to parents/carers. Remember that how a child represents in school is not always indicative of how the child is coping. Signs of anxiety of challenging behaviours may only be evident at home. ✓ Contact books: develop a collaborative relationship with the parents/ carers. Working together is the most positive and beneficial way of supporting the pupil across both settings. ✓ Incorporate a ‘feelings register’ when doing morning and afternoon register. Rather than just responding with ‘yes/here’ they can give a number 1-3, or word (happy, sad, lonely, amazing). If a pupil is unhappy this allows the teacher to intervene at an appropriate time within the next lesson.
Good quality first teaching combined with good quality SEN Support	✓ Use of self-regulations strategies such as traffic light systems, green wrist bands or 5 point scale. ✓ Develop understanding of cause and effect through activities where the pupil has to consider ‘what if?’ such as comic strips or social stories. ✓ Provide the pupil with a safe place or quiet area to seek out when needed. ✓ Use of choices board to allow the child to have some control but still achieving the same end result. ✓ Check in and out daily with an adult. This helps the pupil prepare for the day ahead. Likewise have closure on any issues that have arisen during the day. ✓ Work to identify potential stressors/triggers through observations/pupil voice and pictures (5 point scale). ✓ Use the SPENCE Anxiety Scale, Boxall Profile, Self-Image Profile or Strengths, Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ’s) as a holistic approach to understanding the pupils well-being.

Co-ordination difficulties

Good quality first teaching	✓ Consider reasonable adjustments to equipment such a range of pencil grips, chunky pens, writing slopes, move and sit/wobble cushions, handed rulers, looped and left handed scissors. ✓ Alternatives to handwriting such as talking tins or other voice recording apps, scribing or typing. ✓ Rest/movement breaks. ✓ Seating position in the class. Pupils with co-ordination difficulties find it better to sit facing the board, as this makes copying and tracking easier for them.
Good quality first teaching combined with good quality SEN Support	✓ Extra time for processing and completing work, not just in school but homework too. Could parents scribe homework for it be recorded on a talking tin on other voice recording app? ✓ Provide opportunities for learning touch typing: https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/articles/z3c6tfr ✓ Provide written, visual and recorded support. Use images and break long chunks of text up. When reading is a challenge, it can be helpful for a child to have recorded materials and books to listen to. ✓ Pre-teach motor skills. If your lesson includes using scissors, folding paper, or any other task that might cause a child to struggle, provide plenty of assistance and try to introduce the student to the activity beforehand, so he or she has a chance to practice and get familiar with the physical manipulations required. ✓ Jump ahead programme (or equivalent motor skills development programme) attendance and recording of achievements.

Sensory difficulties

Good quality first teaching	✓ Provide sensory rest breaks/movement breaks. ✓ Fidget toys/chew toys. ✓ Provide a clear visual timetable with plenty of preparation for transitions. ✓ Pre-teaching: help prepare the pupil by providing sensory circuit and regular movement breaks PRIOR to lessons and/or as required during lessons. ✓ Sensory pathways in place in school.
Good quality first teaching combined with good quality SEN Support	✓ Access to sensory circuits. ✓ Access to ear-defenders, desk partition boards, weighted blankets, quiet area, safe/calming zone. ✓ Access to a sensory tool box. ✓ Access to a structured lunch club/quiet area if the pupil finds being in a noisy playground/food hall difficult. ✓ Knowledge of impact of sensory activities to achieve the required benefits for the child.

Memory and retention difficulties

Good quality first teaching	✓ All class work and homework should be differentiated across all subjects to enable the pupil to access the full curriculum. ✓ Use of modelling to aid understanding. ✓ Scaffold work by providing writing frames / prompt sheets. ✓ Key vocab is displayed with appropriate visuals. ✓ Use of talking tins and other recording apps so the pupil can verbalise their ideas and play back to help aid memory. ✓ Break instructions down into small chunks. ✓ Check a pupil’s understanding by asking them to repeat back an instruction. ✓ Teach rehearsal and visualisation techniques to aid memory. ✓ Provide repetitions – exact repetitions and rephrasing. ✓ Encourage active listening – agree a way for pupils to ask for help or clarification. ✓ To instil a positive state of mind, be relaxed about difficulties and support pupils in their attempts to overcome them. ✓ Use of task management boards: tasks are broken down into small manageable steps. These steps are shown explicitly. ✓ Provide written, visual and recorded support. Use images and break long chunks of text up. When reading is a challenge, it can be helpful for a child to have recorded materials and books to listen to.
Good quality first teaching combined with good quality SEN Support	✓ Pre-teaching: help prepare the pupil by pre-teaching key words and concepts PRIOR to lessons. ✓ Extra time for processing and completing work, not just in school but homework too. Ask parents to scribe homework for it be recorded on to a talking tin or recording app?

Emotional / well-being difficulties

Good quality first teaching	✓ Speak to parents/carers. Remember that how a child represents in school is not always indicative of how the child/young person is coping. Signs of anxiety or emotional behaviours may only be evident in one environment. ✓ Contact books: develop a collaborative relationship with the parents/ carers. Working together is the most positive and beneficial way of supporting the pupil across both settings. ✓ Incorporate a ‘feelings register’ when doing morning and afternoon register. Rather than just responding with ‘yes/here’ they can give a number 1-3, or word (happy, sad, lonely, amazing). If a pupil is unhappy this allows the teacher to explore this at an appropriate time within the next lesson. ✓ Promote whole school strategy of Well-Being Mentors, or similar. Bexley EIT team can advise on this. ✓ Introduce a feelings box within the classroom, this can be filled with sensory objects and can help pupils, regulate their feelings at challenging times. ✓ Start each day with a positive compliment session, or use a check-in process that focuses on well-being and begin each day from a fresh start. It is important not to take presenting behaviours personally. This approach can help build positive relationships. ✓ Understand and look beyond the behaviours of pupils, often there are unresolved issues that sit under the behaviour symptoms. Getting to know your pupils’ triggers for behaviours are key. ✓ Use a wide variety of high quality PHSE/SEAL resources. ✓ Use the 5 ways to Wellbeing Resources https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/five-ways-to-mental-wellbeing
Good quality first teaching combined with good quality SEN Support	✓ Check in and out daily with an adult. This helps the pupil prepare for the day ahead. Likewise, have closure on any issues that have arisen throughout the day. ✓ Use the SPENCE Anxiety Scale, Boxall Profile, Self-Image Profile or Strengths, Difficulties Questionnaire (SQQ’s) as a holistic approach to understanding the pupil’s well-being. (copies in SENCo Drop Box). ✓ Encourage use of worry box or worry diary (in home or school) where the child/young person writes down or draws their worries, ensuring this is followed up by any specific adult in the appropriate setting daily. ✓ Give pupils the opportunity for a short-managed time out, within an agreed space in the classroom, with support of a visual time. This will help them to begin to manage their emotions, when they start to escalate.

Expected good class practice to support pupils with...

Reluctant speakers / selective mutism

Good quality first teaching	✓ Do not draw whole class attention to the fact that the pupil does not speak. ✓ Remove all pressures to speak but ensure that all associations with communication are positive. ✓ Understand the child's anxiety. ✓ Staff to discreetly acknowledge the child's difficulty and how they feel – discussing phobias and anxiety may be useful. (It may be helpful to allow the pupil to develop a special relationship with one adult.) ✓ Allow and accept communication in any form (e.g. recording answers on paper, typing etc...). Consider other methods of communication to support pupils to express themselves (i.e. writing, gesture, drawing). E.g. a wave to answer the register, provide a visual for the pupil to request help or use the toilet. ✓ Ask yes/no questions and provide forced alternatives where choices need to be made. ✓ Reduce the pupil's feelings of failure. ✓ Provide frequent opportunities to engage interact (without pressure) in order to prevent the pupil embracing their non-speaking role. ✓ Encourage pupils to play/interact with their peers in the classroom and on the playground. ✓ Make comments which praise of the pupil's effort with the task rather than comment on their speech.
Good quality first teaching combined with good quality SEN Support	✓ Provide an environment where the pupil feels safe (this may be away from the classroom but would be free from distractions/interruptions) for rapport building with a key adult and opportunities to communicate without anxiety. ✓ Provide motivating and engaging activities (not necessarily curriculum based) for the child in a relaxed environment, giving the pupil an irresistible urge to communicate. ✓ School staff to incorporate a whole school approach to reluctant speaker strategy (including all support staff e.g. caretakers etc.) ✓ Staff to monitor pupil's anxiety through use of visual support (e.g. using traffic light/smiley faces which the pupil can point to show how they are feeling). ✓ Ensure Speech and Language care plan recommendations are put into place. ✓ Refer to stages of Reluctant Speaker for a targeted individualised approach (see drop box).