

West Northamptonshire's Ordinarily Available Provision: Inclusive Provision Toolkit (schools)



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Key Terms

In this guidance we refer to the following:

- Children and young people as **CYP**
- Parents or carers as **families**
- Special educational needs and disabilities as **SEND**
- The Assess, Plan, Do, Review Cycle as the **Graduated Approach or APDR**
- The provision the school makes to ensure the emotional and physical welfare of CYP as **pastoral support**



Clicking on this icon will take you to the WNC Local Offer for further information for families

Clicking on this icon will take you to the WNC SENCO Zone Padlet for further information for schools and settings

Introduction

Expectations for Educational settings

4 areas of need

Inclusion in Action

Glossary



In West Northamptonshire our vision is for all children and young people (CYP), including those with SEND, to thrive, fulfil their potential and live their best life. (West Northamptonshire SEND and AP Strategy 2023-2026)

This guidance has been put together to help everyone better understand the provision that should be ordinarily available in mainstream primary and secondary schools and other education settings in West Northamptonshire. Early identification and early intervention of SEND is vital to prevent escalation of need.

A separate Early Years Inclusive Provision Toolkit, which sets out what should be ordinarily available in Early Years settings, is currently being co-produced and will be available in a similar format in September 2026.

The Graduated Approach

Together IPT and The SEND Ranges form a graduated response providing a comprehensive framework to help practitioners embed inclusive high-quality teaching for all CYP. The IPT and The SEND Ranges offer a continuum of good practice, using universal strategies like visual aids, scaffolding, and other adaptive approaches through to specific provision and interventions to meet need. Using both tools together ensures all settings have a clear pathway to escalating support when needed, as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice.

West Northamptonshire's Council's "Inclusive Provision Toolkit (IPT)" refers to the inclusive, high-quality teaching and support strategies all mainstream settings should routinely offer for all CYP and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). It is envisaged that most CYPs needs will be met through the notional budget.

West Northamptonshire's Council's "SEND Ranges" guidance contains what is available for more complex needs, bridging the gap between universal provision and specialist help within a graduated support system (Assess, Plan, Do, Review). The SEND Ranges have been developed and updated with our multi-agency partners.

IPT and The SEND Ranges provide dynamic, responsive and fluid support for 0-25. The SEND Ranges are not linear steps or fixed categories. They are designed to flex in line with a CYP's changing needs over time.

- CYP **move between ranges** as their strengths, needs, and circumstances change
- Support can be **increased, adapted or reduced** at different points
- Progress, not placement, determines the level of support required
- Inclusive Provision Toolkit **remains the foundation** at every range



Important Points to Note when Using the Graduated Approach

- **Needs-led, not label-led**

Decisions are based on current evidence of need, not diagnosis alone.

- **Graduated and responsive**

Support is adjusted through Assess – Plan – Do – Review, ensuring timely changes.

- **Blended provision**

Strategies from IPT/The SEND Ranges can operate simultaneously, rather than replacing each other.

- **Temporary or sustained**

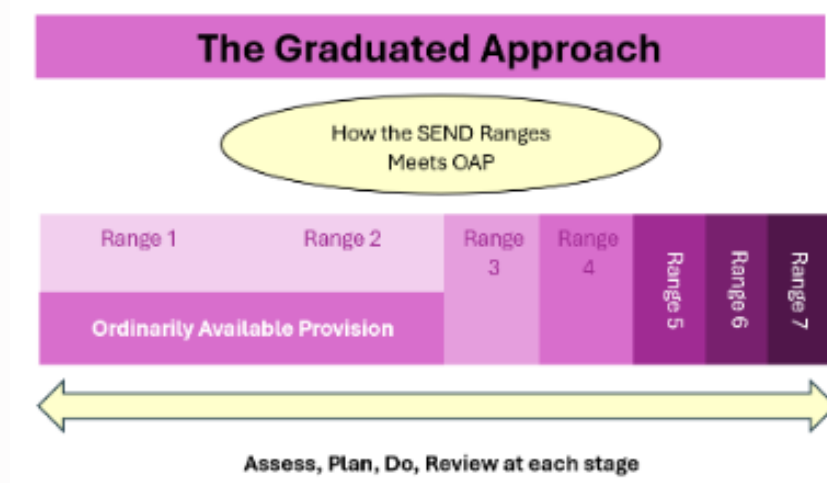
Some CYP may need short term enhanced support, while others need longer term provision.

What this means in practice:

- A CYP may:
 - Move *into* a higher SEND range during periods of difficulty
 - Move *back* towards IPT as independence increases
 - Sit **across ranges**, drawing on support from more than one range at the same time

SEND support adapts to the CYP, the CYP does not have to fit the range.

This flexible approach ensures support remains **proportionate, inclusive and effective**, responding to development, progress, and well-being.



The future of SEND

The recently published 'Schools White Paper' [Every child achieving and thriving \(HTML version\) - GOV.UK](#) focuses on:

- Greater inclusive practices and focus on inclusion in mainstream settings
- Streamlining processes and procedures to improve support for SEND children and young people
- Training for all staff in line with these reforms
- Consideration of budget reforms in light of the growing pressures
- Building on best practice
- A focus on effective Alternative Provision and Resource Bases supporting mainstream settings

The work around the programme '[What Works in SEND](#)' builds on research evidence from various DfE SEND Programmes and those of the research carried out by Warwick University. [Inclusion of Children and Young People with SEND in Schools – How can local areas support schools? – Key messages](#). These are useful documents to read and will be helpful in formulating your inclusion policy in settings, schools and colleges.

In addition, '[Inclusion in Practice' Summer 2025](#)' chaired by Tom Rees highlights five key emerging themes:

- Knowing CYP well, early and often
- High quality and evidence-informed teaching practice
- Coherent and expert targeted support
- Strengthening inclusion through relationships and partnerships
- Inclusion is a strategic and shared responsibility



About Inclusion Funding

Inclusion Funding aims to help mainstream schools in West Northamptonshire provide early, targeted support for children and young people (CYP) with emerging SEND needs.

It is non-statutory Element 3 funding from the Local Authority's High Needs Block and is designed to strengthen inclusive practice, improve outcomes, and reduce the need for more intensive support later.

The purpose of the funding is to support early intervention, inclusive practice, and measurable progress for CYP with SEND at individual, setting and community levels.

The following functions of Inclusion Funding were co-produced with a range of educational settings and services:

1. Promotes Meaningful Progress and Positive Outcomes

Funding should lead to measurable improvements in the CYP's learning, development, and overall wellbeing.

2. Strengthens the CYP's Sense of Place

It should enhance the CYP's feeling of inclusion and connection within their educational setting.

3. Enables Access to Tailored Support and Innovative Approaches

Funding allows CYP to benefit from targeted interventions and new strategies, especially where previous approaches have not met their needs.

4. Creates Wider Impact Across the Setting

The benefits should extend beyond the individual CYP, influencing inclusive practice and capacity-building within the setting.

5. Closes the Attainment Gap

It should support CYP to reach their potential, preventing the gap between them and their peers from widening further.



Inclusion Funding - Individual level

What the funding can support:

- Evidence-based interventions: Targeted support aligned to identified needs
- Staff CPD: Training specific to a CYP's area of need
- Implementing professional advice: Actions recommended by external specialists

Who can apply:

All levels:

- Eligibility: Any child in a mainstream primary or secondary setting in West Northamptonshire

Individual level (must evidence all):

- Less than expected progress: Barriers to learning and/or wellbeing in one or more areas
- Graduated response: At least two APDR cycles with impact evidenced
- Use of SEND Ranges: To identify needs and match provision
- Status: No EHC needs assessment (EHCNA) underway and no EHCP
- On roll: CYP is enrolled in the mainstream setting
- Provision type: Intervention is evidence-based and/or recommended by an external professional

Documents required to prepare:

Mandatory

- Individual Support Plans: At least two APDR cycles with needs, actions, and impact
- Provision map: Fully costed, including the school's contribution
- Funding application request page:
- Payment details, quotes (if relevant)
- Implementation timeline
- Impact measures
- Sufficiency plans post-intervention
- How learning will be shared

Optional

- Reports/advice from EPS, SaLT, OT, CAMHS, GP
- Use SEND Ranges: Build the Individual Support Plan - you can use the SEND Ranges without requesting IF; submit to IF only if needs persist after at least two APDR cycles



Inclusion Funding - Setting level

What the funding can support

- Whole-school or targeted CPD: e.g. Autism Awareness, Supporting Dyslexia
- Universal adjustments: e.g. Autism-friendly classroom approaches
- Cohort interventions: e.g. Wellcomm speech and language tools

Not funded:

- Capital works: Any changes to buildings or estates

Who can apply:

All levels:

- Eligibility: Mainstream primary or secondary settings in West Northamptonshire

Setting level:

- Strategic fit: Focus appears in the school development/improvement plan
- Cohort impact: Intervention benefits a defined group of CYP
- Provision type: Evidence-based and/or externally recommended

How to apply:

Submit:

- School development/improvement plan
- School-level data for the area of focus
- [Funding application request page](#)



Inclusion Funding - Community level

What the funding can support:

- Multi-setting projects: Cluster, locality, trust-led initiatives
- Themes: Transition, attendance, family support, or shared development priorities

Not funded:

- Capital works: Any changes to buildings or estates

Who can apply:

All levels:

- Eligibility: Mainstream primary or secondary settings in West Northamptonshire

Community level:

- Strategic fit: Focus appears in participating settings' development/improvement plans
- Scale: Involves more than one setting or has wider community impact (e.g. locality, trust, feeder schools)

How to apply:

Submit an overview of the application and an invitation will be sent to the lead to the next decision group asking them to deliver a presentation that includes the following information:

- Background and context
- Supporting data
- Project proposal
- Costings: Including setting contributions
- Intended impact and measures
- Timeline
- How learning will be shared



All staff within the school

All staff within the school are responsible for supporting all children and young people (CYP), including those with additional or SEND needs. Every practitioner should have the knowledge and confidence to support inclusive practice.

All staff and governors should be familiar with the Equality Act 2010 and their roles and responsibilities around this. This is particularly important when considering reasonable adjustments. For further guidance and support please see the Council for Disabled Children's guide for schools [here](#).

The roles set out below may be delivered in different ways in different schools.

Headteacher/Principal

Creating an inclusive culture that celebrates **all** CYP and makes best endeavours to use the resources available to them to meet the needs of all.

- Ensuring provision is monitored and evaluated regularly to meet **all** CYP's needs and inform improved practice
- Ensuring that staff have the adequate skills and understanding to meet the needs of **all** CYP.
- Ensuring the SEND Information report is up to date and accessible.
- Ensuring the Accessibility Plan is up to date and being implemented.
- Supports staff in working in partnership with parents / carers.
- Ensuring SEND Notional Funding informs provision and impacts on outcomes.

Teacher

The Teacher Standards require teachers to be knowledgeable, skilled, and proactive in their approach to supporting CYP with SEND, ensuring that all of them have the opportunity to succeed. Parents / carers should talk to the class teacher in the first instance about the needs of the CYP and the provision / support being made.

The Teacher Standards emphasise the importance of adapting teaching to meet the needs of all CYP, including those with SEND. Teachers are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how to assess and support CYP with SEND, and to use this knowledge to plan and deliver effective, adaptive lessons.

Key Aspects of Teacher Standards in relation to SEND include:

- **Adaptive Teaching:**

Teachers must adapt their teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all CYP, including those with SEND. This involves knowing how to differentiate instruction and employ various approaches to effectively teach all CYP.

- **High Expectations**

Teachers should set high expectations for all CYP, regardless of their abilities or needs, and provide appropriate support to help them achieve these goals.

- **Assessment**

Teachers need to make accurate and productive use of assessment to understand CYP' needs and inform their teaching, including formative assessment to identify areas where they need support.

- **Behaviour Support**

Teachers need to manage behaviour effectively to create a safe and positive learning environment for all CYP, including those with SEND.

- **Professional Development**

Teachers should engage in continuous professional development to enhance their knowledge and skills in supporting CYP with SEND, including understanding the SEND Code of Practice.

- **Collaboration**

Teachers should work collaboratively with other professionals, such as SENCOs and support staff, to provide the best possible support for CYP with SEND.

- **Safeguarding**

Teachers must be aware of safeguarding procedures and act within statutory frameworks to ensure the well-being of all CYP, including those with SEND.

SENDCo

- Ensuring **all** practitioners understand their responsibilities to all CYP, and the school's approach to identifying and meeting needs.
- Advising and supporting colleagues.
- Ensuring parents are closely involved throughout and that their insights inform action taken by the school.
- Liaising with professionals or agencies beyond the school.

Governor/Trustee

- Governors play a crucial role in supporting CYP with SEND in schools.
- They are responsible for ensuring the school's SEND policy is effective, resources are allocated appropriately, and that the school meets its legal obligations under the SEND Code of Practice.
- This includes monitoring the progress of CYP with SEND, overseeing the work of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), and ensuring that the voices of CYP and parents are heard.

Responsibilities include:

1. Strategic Oversight and Leadership:

- **Setting the Vision:**

Governors help shape the school's overall vision and strategic direction, ensuring that SEND is a priority.

- **Policy Development and Review:**

They participate in the development and regular review of the school's SEND policy, ensuring it aligns with the SEND Code of Practice.

- **Resource Allocation:**

Governors are responsible for ensuring that adequate resources, including funding and staffing, are allocated to support CYP with SEND.

2. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- **Progress Monitoring:**

Governors monitor the progress of CYP with SEND, working with the SENCO to track their achievements and identify any areas where support needs to be enhanced.

- **Impact of Provision:**

They evaluate the effectiveness of the school's SEND provision, ensuring it is having a positive impact on CYPs outcomes.

- **Reviewing Documentation:**

Governors ensure that the school maintains accurate and up-to-date records related to SEND, including CYPs profiles and individual education plans.

- **Website Publication:**

They ensure that the school publishes the necessary information about its SEND provision on the school website.

3. Collaboration and Communication:

- **Working with the SENCO:**

Governors establish a strong working relationship with the SENCO, providing support and challenge to ensure they have the resources and training they need.

- **Engaging with Parents and Children and young people:**

They ensure that the views and perspectives of parents and CYP with SEND are considered and incorporated into decision-making.

- **Reporting to the Governing Body:**

The SEND Governor or a designated committee provides regular updates and reports to the full governing body on SEND matters.

- **Liaising with Staff:**

They communicate with other school staff, including teachers and support staff, to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to SEND.



4. Ensuring Compliance:

Adhering to the SEND Code of Practice:

Governors ensure the school complies with the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice.

Accessibility Planning:

They ensure that the school has a comprehensive accessibility plan in place, addressing physical access, curriculum adaptations, and other relevant areas.

Safeguarding:

Governors ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures are in place for all CYP, including those with SEND.



Further Resources

Click on the icons to be taken directly to the website

We recommend that the resources below are used alongside the Inclusive Provision Toolkit / Ranges 1 & 2 to ensure needs are met effectively.



West Northamptonshire Local Offer

The Local Offer gives CYP with SEND and their families information about the support services that are available in their local area. It also signposts families to workshops, advice, resources and other agencies within West Northamptonshire



West Northamptonshire SENCo Zone Padlet

The Padlet sits alongside the IPT toolkit and guidance and offers support to educational settings beyond the SEND network meetings. It is a place to share practice, resources and documents to support the universal offer in settings



NHS Children's Speech and Language Therapy

Resources, toolkits, advice sheets and further information can be found on the Speech and language for children website



WNC SEND Ranges

The Inclusive Provision Toolkit sits alongside the SEND Ranges document and the two should be used together to understand and support the needs of children and young people.

What does Inclusion look like for SEND children and young people in WNC?

“ I like that everyone can use the ear defenders without asking. I use them in writing because they **stop me getting distracted** ”

“ I like **having choices** about how I show what I understand ”

“ I know who to ask for help and **they listen to me** ”

“ **I use my break card** when I feel wriggly and I go to the rainbow room to chill out ”

“ When teachers **explain things in more depth**, it really helps ”

“ When I get worried I have my **zones sheet** to help me, I can go to different adults to help ”

“ I have stuff that helps me like a **special seat and pencils** ”

“ **Movement breaks in English are the best.** The teacher gets the class to a do a short movement task ”



Part 1

Expectations for Inclusive Educational settings in West Northamptonshire



The Foundations of Inclusive Practice

Before we look at specific needs, we must ensure the environment is right for all children and young people (CYP). This section outlines the universal standards of Quality First Teaching that every CYP in West Northamptonshire should experience. These expectations are rooted in a "can-do" culture, where the physical environment, staff attitudes, and school leadership work in harmony to remove barriers before they arise. It is about the subtle, high-impact adjustments; like clear signage, consistent routines, and empathetic relationships, that allow the majority of CYP to thrive without the need for additional intervention.



All schools must apply the principles underpinning the SEND Code of Practice (2015) 0 to 25 years and have regard to the Equality Act 2010 throughout the child and young person's (CYP) learning journey.

These include:

- Listening to and taking account of the views, wishes and feelings of the CYP and of their parents / carers.
- Planning that is centred on the CYP's individual learning goals, considering strategies to support their development.
- Arrangements in place to regularly assess the environment, teaching and the curriculum, and access to information to ensure it is as accessible as it can be (in line with School Accessibility Plan and equality duties).
- The CYP's progress is clearly recorded and used to inform planning and next steps.
- Providing a curriculum that is adapted appropriately to take account of cohort needs in a mainstream setting.
- Identification of specialist services to support the CYP's development and learning.
- The CYP and their parents / carers participating as fully as possible in decisions and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions.
- Supporting the CYP and their parents / carers in order to facilitate their development and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for the next stage in their lives. (SEND Code of Practice 2015)

Mainstream schools (including academies and free schools) **must** have a special educational needs coordinator (SENCO). The SENCO **must** be a qualified teacher, or the headteacher, working at the school.

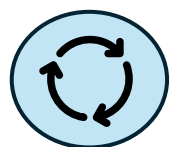
Under the Equality Act 2010 schools **must** make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services for CYP with disabilities, to prevent them being put at a substantial disadvantage. These statutory duties are anticipatory – schools need to think ahead about what disabled CYP might need.

Schools have a duty under the Children and Families Act (2014) to make arrangements / provide support to CYP with Medical Conditions.

All schools **must** publish certain information on their website, including an **SEN Information Report** and an **Accessibility Plan**.

The SEN Information Report gives details about a school's provision and support for CYP with SEND and must be updated at least once a year.

An Accessibility Plan covers a three-year period and should show how the school plans to make improvements to the physical environment and in the provision of written information and increase access to the curriculum for disabled CYP.



Graduated Approach



Pupil Voice



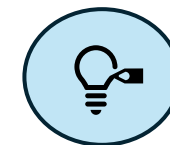
Family Engagement



Adaptive Teaching



Environment – physical and sensory



Equipment and Resources



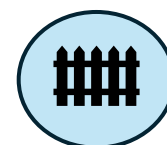
Assessment



Staff Skills, Confidence and Training



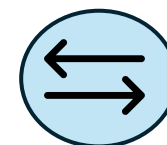
Pastoral Support



Barriers to Learning



Preparation for Adulthood (PfA)

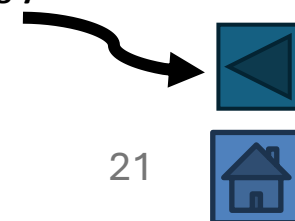


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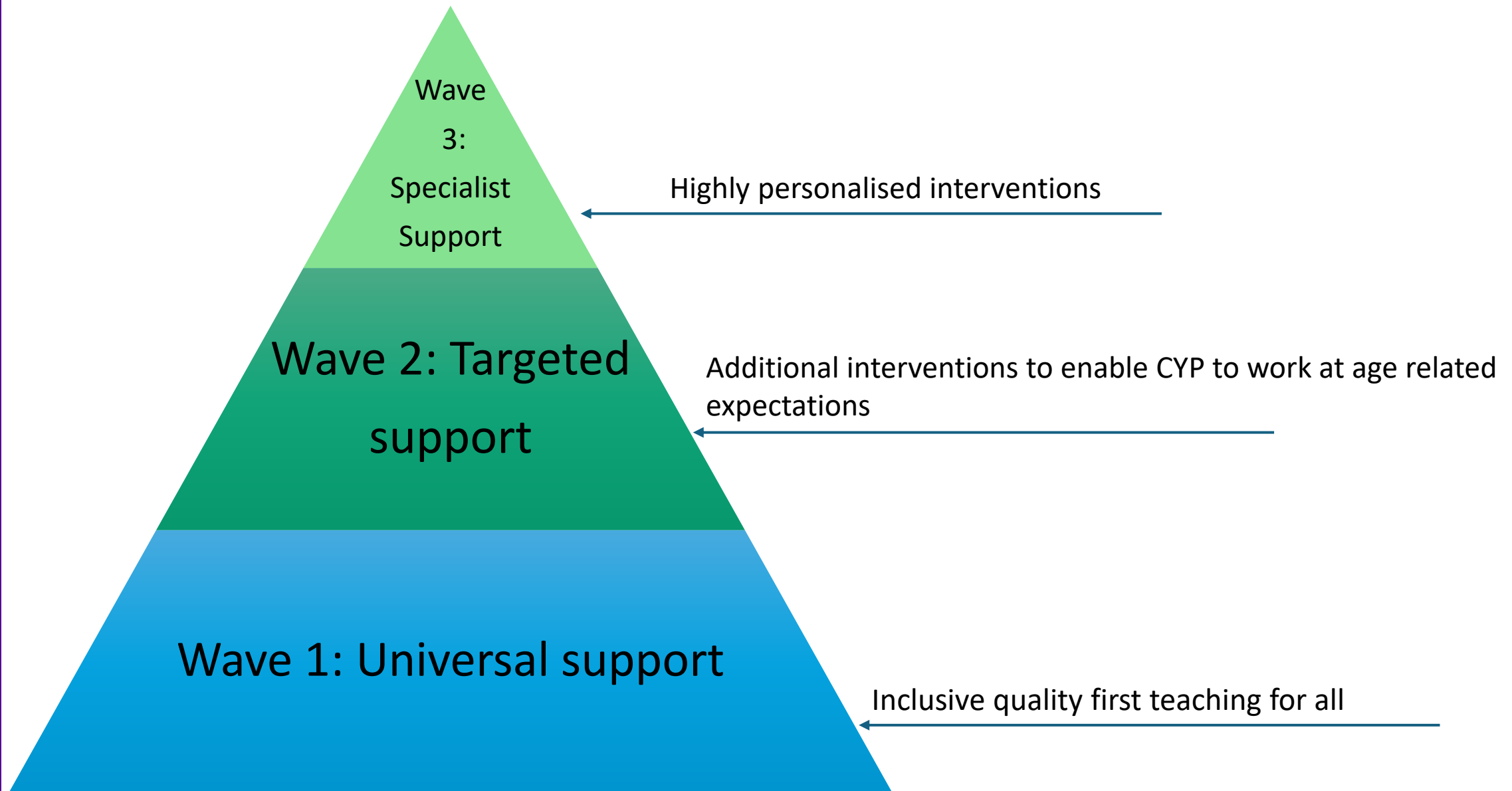
Introduction to the Graduated Approach

Educational provision that is ordinarily available for children and young people (CYP) who attend educational settings in West Northamptonshire is inextricably linked with how these institutions are funded to provide for SEND. It is also inextricably linked with the specification of what these education settings should do, and what processes they should follow. The graduated approach starts at whole school level through Wave One universal provision: Quality First Teaching that is inclusive teaching for all CYP. Where a potential special educational need has been identified, this cyclical process becomes increasingly targeted and personalised.

Educational settings must provide a graduated response to CYP's SEND, including a graduated approach to support. The four stages of action are described as Assess, Plan, Do and Review.



The Graduated Approach : Waves of Intervention



The Graduated Approach

Educational settings should demonstrate, through evidence, the application of the Assess/Plan/Do/Review (APDR) cycle over time. Earlier decisions and actions should be revisited and reviewed, new approaches and plans are put into place and external help and advice is accessed where necessary.



‘a four-part cycle through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the pupil’s needs and of what supports the pupil in making good progress and securing good outcomes’

SEND Code of Practice 2015

Demonstrating application of the Graduated Approach – The Assess, Plan, Do, Review Cycle

Why is the Assess, plan, do, review cycle important?

The APDR cycle helps to do the following:

- Monitor and track in more detail the progress of the CYP.
- Give a growing understanding of needs.
- Identify barriers to learning and adjust the curriculum and provision accordingly.
- Gather information in a cyclical approach to assess need, plan and provide support and review and evaluate that support so it can be adjusted accordingly.
- Ensure new approaches and plans are put into place with external help and advice where necessary.
- Secure good progress and outcomes.



Guidance on the Graduated Approach

Assess

- Gather information about the CYP's current skills and level of attainment, and other relevant data to gain a holistic picture of need.
- Use in-school assessment tools such as observations, discussions with key staff, screening and/or diagnostic tools to identify and assess needs.
- Include any relevant assessments carried out by external agencies (e.g., EP, SaLT, Advisory Teachers).
- Gather CYP and parent/carers views.

Plan

- Planning takes place with parents/carers, the SENCo, relevant school staff and any specialist services involved, to agree what needs to happen.
- The individualised plan reflects priority needs, specifies outcomes and is clear about how progress will be measured and reviewed and, where possible, is shared with the CYP.
- Interventions and targeted support are outlined, including the advice of specialist professionals and the SENCo.
- A time limit is agreed for interventions and a clear date set for review.



Guidance on the Graduated Approach

Do

- The plan is implemented as agreed, and parents/carers are kept informed using approaches such as a home–school diary, weekly email exchange, etc.
- The SENDCO, teachers and support staff continue to work collaboratively to ensure support is in place and progress is being made towards outcomes.
- Continue to observe and record evidence of support and progress as part of daily APDR.
- Special interests, strengths and favourite activities are utilised to motivate and engage the CYP.

Review

- A review meeting takes place involving parents/carers, the SENCo, relevant school staff and any specialist services that may be involved.
- The review includes the CYP's views.
- Discussion focuses on:
 - What's working?
 - What's not working?
 - Have outcomes been achieved?
 - What needs to change?
 - What will we do next?



Guidance on Provision Maps

The SEND Code of Practice states that:

- The provision made for pupils with SEN should be recorded accurately and kept up to date.*
- Schools should particularly record details of additional or different provision made under SEN support which should form part of regular discussions with parents about the child's progress, expected outcomes from the support and planned next steps.*
- Schools should ensure that they have accurate information to evidence the SEN support that has been provided over the pupil's time in the school, as well as its impact.*

At its core, a provision map outlines the interventions, adjustments and support systems in place for different areas of need.

It should clearly show how support is matched to identified needs, who is delivering it, and what outcomes are expected.

A well-constructed provision map supports the graduated approach of assess, plan, do, review, ensuring that provision is purposeful, targeted and regularly evaluated. It also provides transparency around how resources are deployed.

Importantly, a provision map is not just a record of what is in place; it is a working document that should inform teaching, support decision-making, and drive improvements in outcomes for CYP. When used effectively, it helps ensure that provision is both responsive and impactful, enabling all CYP to access learning and make progress.

For further resources on Provision maps please visit the SENCo Zone Padlet



Guidance on Provision Maps

1. **Start with purpose, not paperwork:** Does this help staff know what to do? Does it show how needs are being met? Does it show impact?
2. **Clearly link Provision to need:** Avoid generic terms like 'TA support' – specify why and for whom
3. **Organise by Graduated Approach:** Assess – what is the need? Plan – what support is in place? Do – who delivers it and how often? Review – what difference is it making?
4. **Include the Essential Components:** Area of Need, Provision/ intervention, Frequency, Staff responsible, CYPs, Review dates, Impact
5. **Accessible for staff. It should be:** Easy to read at a glance, Jargon-free where possible, Structured clearly
6. **Show impact, not just input, include:** Measurable outcomes, Review notes, Evidence of progress or next steps
7. **Distinguish between support:** Show the full continuum of provision – Universal, Targeted, Specialist
8. **Make it costed:** Show how resources are allocated and link spending to outcomes
9. **Align with whole-school systems, it should connect with:** SEND register, Pupil progress data, EHCP outcomes (where applicable), Behaviour and attendance systems
10. **Keep it live and reviewed regularly:** Update at least termly, responsive to changing needs and used in pupil progress meetings



It is more important than ever to build positive relationships with families and children and young people (CYP). Seeing educational experiences from CYP's point of view can support decision making and processes. [Educational-experiences-of-young-people-with-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-report-young-person-friendly.pdf](#)

For further information, guidance and resources please see:

WNC Collating pupil voice guidance and toolkit

[SENCo Zone](#)

Council for Disabled Children (CDC)

[Jonathan's Blog: What makes good inclusion](#)

Anna Freud

[Pupil voice : Mentally Healthy Schools](#)

Department for Education

[Inspiring and enabling pupil and learner voice – Teaching](#)

Promoting voice and inclusion

[Birth To 5 Matters](#)

Expectations of all settings	What this includes/looks like
Children and young people (CYP) have a voice, contribute to their plans, and participate in their own support processes	• CYP genuinely participate in their own 'assess, plan, do, review' process. Their views are gathered in a range of ways appropriate to the individual. • Settings use the WNC guidance and toolkit document to collate voice through a stages not ages approach. • Effective ways of collating CYP's voice are used such as equal representation on the school's council. The school council directly impacts change and reflects on this in their own sessions. • Teachers and support staff share achievements with CYP and are clear about what they need to do next. • Targets are accessible and adapted to allow all CYP to understand what their goals are. • Person-centred approaches are used as a golden thread across the school. A person-centred process involves listening, thinking together, coaching, sharing ideas and seeking feedback.
Children and young people (CYP) are fully involved in the assessment and review processes	• CYP are fully involved in the graduated approach (assess, plan, do, review) and contribute towards setting and reviewing their outcomes and in identifying the support that works best for them. • CYP are supported to understand their own barriers to learning and to value their achievements. E.g. through the use of one-page profiles. • Settings use the West Northants guidance and toolkit document for collating CYP's voice prior to reviews ensuring they follow a stages not ages approach • Settings ensure they are collating CYP voice consistently and thoughtfully throughout the school year, using this to support and inform next steps.



Positive and trusted alliances with parents/carers are essential for building on embedded approaches to collaboration and co-production. Improved partnerships increase the positive perceptions of the schools, support practitioners in understanding what is important to families and create a sense of community belonging.

For further information, guidance and resources please see:

Fit2Communicate

[The Four Pillars](#)

WNVP

[WNVP West Northants Voices in Partnership](#)

Education Endowment Foundation

[Working with Parents to Support Children's Learning | EEF](#)

WNC Local Offer

[Local Offer | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

SEND IASS

[West Northants SEND IASS |](#)

WNC Family Hubs

[Family Hubs | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

Expectations of Settings	What this includes/looks like
The setting works in partnership with families to ensure they are supported and involved in discussions and decisions related to their child/young person (CYP)	- Families are aware of how they can communicate any information about their CYP and who they should contact. - Schools should discuss any concerns about a CYP's progress with families at the earliest opportunity and the views and experiences of families should always be taken seriously. - The SEN Information Report is co-produced with families and accessible and on the settings' website. This is reviewed on an annual basis. - Families are signposted to the WNC Local Offer: Local Offer West Northamptonshire Council and this is referenced on the setting's website. - Families are aware of how they can communicate any information about their CYP and who they should contact. - Families should be supported to replicate and reinforce strategies in the home. - Families should be included in decisions about the involvement of any professionals - Families are aware of the SEN status of their CYP and the support and interventions in place. They are involved in action planning, setting of targets and/or outcomes and progress reviews. - CYP and their families are provided with guidance/support as necessary, including appropriate software and adapted materials to enable assisted learning in school and to enable improved homework outcomes
Realistic expectations from the school support the holistic development of children and young people (CYP) to support positive outcomes	- Communication to families is planned in consideration of circumstances i.e. one point of contact from the school. - There are face-to-face visits available to school rather than relying on online tools alone - There are informal and formal opportunities to engage families in understanding the systems, policies and ways of working at the school. e.g. CYP and parent/carers surveys, coffee mornings. - There are fixed methods of communication such as face-to-face opportunities, texts, emails or home-school communication books - There is a channel for communication in 'real time' – to address needs/difficulties when they happen to the CYP to avoid rapid escalation. - There are regular opportunities to feedback to parents both positive feedback and areas of concern in advance of any formal parent meetings. - Communication tools are adapted to meet the needs of the family i.e. literacy, EAL.



Teaching and Learning through a Strong Inclusive Curriculum

High-Quality teaching is referred to in the SEND Code of Practice as being the best step to responding to the needs of CYP. For our most vulnerable CYP, considered curriculum choices are essential - striking a careful balance between providing our CYP with access to an ambitious, broad curriculum and supporting their holistic development.

For further information, guidance and resources please see:

EEF – 5 a day principle

[Five a day: supporting high-quality teaching for pupils with...
| EEF](#)

Education Endowment Foundation

[EEF blog: Moving from 'differentiation' to 'adaptive teaching'
| EEF](#)

Alex Quigley

[The 'Adaptive Teaching' Collection](#)

Initial Teacher training and Early Career Framework

[Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework](#)

NASEN – teachers handbook: SEND

[asset.nasen.org.uk/Teacher SEND handbook 30th January
2024.pdf](https://asset.nasen.org.uk/Teacher%20SEND%20handbook%2030th%20January%202024.pdf)

Please visit the SENCo Zone Padlet for practical examples, resources and further information for Adaptive Teaching



Expectations of all settings	What this includes/looks like
High quality and adapted teaching is in place and has been observed and supported by the SENCo and school leaders.	• Teachers have high expectations for all CYP regardless of their needs and use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets. • A broad and balanced curriculum is available and accessible to all CYP. • Strong, positive relationships are established between staff and CYP, taking time to talk to them and listen to them, knowing their strengths and building on them and identifying what they need in the moment. • Lessons have clear and achievable objectives (understood by CYP/ referred to by staff). • Structured teaching is used according to the needs of CYP e.g.: visual timetables, clear concise instructions with written or visual prompts (e.g. now and next cards), particularly during transitions. • Teaching builds on what CYP already know, can do and understand. • CYP are given time to process information before being asked to respond. • Teachers make use of concrete resources along with other visual and other multi-sensory approaches to support learning. • Tasks are broken down into small manageable steps. These steps are shown explicitly. • Teachers use explicit modelling including the thinking behind why an approach is successful. • Teachers explicitly teach new vocabulary including pre teaching for some CYPs. • Common misconceptions are anticipated and explicitly identified and taught. • Time is given for CYP to engage in purposeful practice of new skills and time to reinforce existing learning including overlearning for some CYP to commit things to long term memory (repetition, revisiting, retrieval, to support retention). • Strategies to improve motivation, attention and engagement are embedded in to learning activities (e.g. tasks linked to CYP's interests and aspirations, targeted questioning to maintain focus). • Movement breaks are included for the whole class rather than singling out individuals e.g. completing the daily mile as a whole class. • Where appropriate, high quality learning walls provide a prompt for CYP to reflect on previous learning. • Learning walks with a focus on Inclusion and SEND serve to support the development of best practice and inform professional development and performance management.

Staff adapt teaching to provide suitable learning challenges and cater for different learning needs and styles. Use of success criteria or similar to promote independence, scaffold and support.

- Modelling, cueing, prompting, and self-scaffolding is used to aid understanding and promote independence.
- Visual/audio demonstrations and visual cues/audio commentary are used.
- Key vocabulary is displayed with visuals.
- Alternatives to written recording are used routinely.
- Skills to promote independent learning and/or study skills are explicitly taught.
- CYP have access to homework clubs, or additional support with homework.
- Homework is adapted appropriately for CYP.
- Staff handwriting on the board, working walls and in CYP's books is clear and legible.
- Technology e.g. interactive whiteboard, tablets etc are used to effectively promote engagement and scaffold the learning.

The additional needs of CYP is understood and responded to, and planning incorporates more detailed specialist advice

Adaptation ensures inclusion and access to the curriculum and a suitable mix of challenge and success across for CYP

- All staff are made aware of the strengths, needs and interests of the CYP with SEND, along with appropriate teaching strategies and how best to provide support.
- Where there is an identified need the following provision is made available:
- CYP are given time to process information before being asked to respond.
- Tasks are broken down into small manageable steps. These steps are shown explicitly.
- Pre-teaching of specific language/concepts (across all curriculum areas) with key vocabulary prompts on tables.
- Structured teaching approaches are used e.g. visual timetables, clear concise instructions with written or visual prompts (e.g. now and next cards).
- Adjustment of pace, consideration of the order and/or number of activities to maintain attention.
- Alternative methods of recording are available and become the normal way of working in line with any access arrangements.
- Opportunities for practical experiences to support reinforcement, over learning and generalisation.
- Lessons that include physical activity or movement are well organised, structured and planned to promote full access.

The additional needs of CYP is understood and responded to, and planning incorporates more detailed specialist advice

Adaptation ensures inclusion and access to the curriculum and a suitable mix of challenge and success for CYP

At KS4 flexible teaching arrangements may include:

- Alternative/vocational courses
- Timetabling for reduced options to facilitate supported study options
- Links with FE colleges
- Cross school arrangements may be planned for alternative accreditation in order to deliver full curriculum entitlement.
- Support arrangements (on/off site) for Awards and Vocational Courses.
- Where work experience takes place, there is increased supervisory/planning support.
- Work related learning and college opportunities.

Staff ensure that CYP have opportunities to work in different ways e.g. independently, in a variety of small groups and/or in pairs.

- Strategies are used to actively promote independent learning e.g. through pre-teaching, overlearning, appropriately differentiated resources.
- Teaching enables individual and small group work and includes opportunities for mixed ability grouping (role-modelling/learning through teaching others), flexible group sizes (large/small/pairs to facilitate successful interaction) and structured opportunities for discussions with peers/ supporting adults.
- Seating plans and groupings take account of individual needs and routinely provide opportunities for access to role-models, mixed-ability groups, structured opportunities for conversation and sharing of ideas and access to additional adults where they are available.
- Withdrawal activities will be planned to ensure minimum disruption to the CYP's inclusion and timetable ensuring that CYP are not persistently withdrawn from the classroom or regularly miss the same lessons.
- Withdrawal learning is structured, directed by the teacher and results from pre-planning between the teacher and intervention leader.
- Enhanced adult support to assist learning is delivered in targeted subject areas, in areas of particular need and can take place in the classroom, in individualised learning spaces, with other CYP in groups or individually, and in the playground or lunch hall according to target and outcome.
- Pupil voice is encouraged and valued when planning CYP groupings or withdrawal activities.
- CYP are explicitly taught appropriate skills to manage routines and independence.

Staff provide opportunities for collaborative learning and peer support.	• Relational practices are used to build and maintain positive relationships across the whole setting community. • There are opportunities to develop peer awareness/sensitivity and support for different needs and disabilities both in and out of the classroom
All practitioners, including Teaching Assistants, make a positive contribution to CYP progress.	• Additional adults will be used creatively and flexibly to teach and support learning, directed by the class or subject teacher and according to the needs of CYP; examples include: ○ refocusing attention ○ facilitate understanding of a task or written text ○ reinforce taught concepts in learning activities ○ assist in social interaction ○ assist in curriculum access / adaptation ○ support CYP during transitions between tasks and locations ○ promote independence ○ facilitate social use of language. (Please see further information on the guidance on effective TA deployment - Deployment of Teaching Assistants EEF)
Positive behaviour for learning is promoted through appropriate whole class support systems	• Well-structured lessons with visual support for those that need it (such as visual timetable, now and next board). • Sensory needs are considered, and CYP have access to learning breaks and any sensory equipment. They may require (writing slopes, pencil grips, wobble cushions, fidget toys, ear defenders and weighted blankets). • Clearly communicated and understood behavioural expectations (visually supported) are consistently applied. • Suitable learning environment (including workstation if necessary and quiet area of the classroom). • Self and co - regulation strategies are in place in the class or in shared learning spaces that all CYP can access • Motivators are used effectively and consistently in line with school behaviour curriculums and policies.

Some children and young people (CYP) require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers. The physical and sensory environment of a school can significantly influence the comfort, engagement, and ability to learn of CYP. Making thoughtful adjustments helps reduce unnecessary barriers, supports diverse sensory needs, and ensures all CYP can access learning and feel safe, calm, and ready to succeed.

For further information, guidance and resources please see:

The Equality Act 2010

[Equality Act 2010](#)

The Education Hub

[What are reasonable adjustments and how do they help disabled pupils at school? – The Education Hub](#)

Guidance for schools

[Technical guidance for schools in England | EHRC](#)

WNC

[Hearing and vision specialist support for children and young people | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

Neuroinclusive Education Network

[Primary Field Guide - Enabling Environments \(Whole School Access\) | Neuroinclusive Education Network](#)

Neuroinclusive Education Network

[Secondary Field Guide - Enabling Environments \(Whole School Access\) | Neuroinclusive Education Network](#)

Whole School SEND

[Classroom Environment | Whole School SEND](#)

Expectations of all settings	What this includes/looks like
The physical environment is adapted to meet the needs of CYP	• An Accessibility Plan (compliant with the Equality Act 2010) is compiled, published on the school website and regularly reviewed, following the assessment of the physical accessibility of the building and individual learning spaces. • “Reasonable adjustments” are made according to individual needs e.g. access to adapted PE equipment, computer keyboards or software. • Tables and chairs are the appropriate height for the individual needs of the CYP. • The views of CYP are captured and used to inform person-centred accessibility and environmental provision for all.
All staff are aware of sensory needs and issues that may impact on learners	• The sensory needs of CYP are known by all relevant staff (e.g. included in one-page profiles) and used effectively e.g. to plan seating arrangements and movement breaks. • Planned and unplanned learning breaks are included within each lesson for CYP where required. • CYP who wear glasses and/ or hearing aids wear them and are seated in the optimum position. • Hand dominance is considered in seating arrangements. • Consideration is given to classroom displays in order to minimise visual sensory overload for some CYP. • Staff are aware of lighting in the room e.g. use of natural light, glare from the board, who is facing the light, where you stand in relation to the light. • CYP can view the Interactive whiteboard without visual distractions such as pictures and visuals displayed around the whiteboard. • Visually accessible backgrounds and font styles are used on the whiteboard. • Staff are aware of smells and noise in the room and take steps to alleviate the impact on any particular individuals who may be impacted by these E.g. If a classroom is next to the canteen or music room. • Strategies are in place to manage noise levels and CYP have access to supportive resources e.g. ear defenders/ ear plugs.

All staff are aware of sensory needs and issues that may impact CYP

- CYP who are easily distracted are seated away from doors and windows.
- The teacher's desk, storage areas and free spaces are organised, so they do not provide a sensory distraction.
- Quiet areas of the classroom and/or distraction reduced areas for work or breaks are provided (e.g. workstation, quiet zone, safe space etc).
- CYP who need it, know how to access a “calm area / safe place” within the school at other times of the day e.g. at lunchtime.
- Low arousal alternatives to playtime are offered for relevant CYP.

All schools have duties under the Equality Act 2010 towards individual disabled children and young people (CYP). They must make reasonable adjustments, including provision of auxiliary aids and services for CYP with a disability.

For further information, guidance and resources please see:

The Equality Act 2010

[Equality Act 2010](#)

The Education Hub

[What are reasonable adjustments and how do they help disabled pupils at school? – The Education Hub](#)

Guidance for schools

[Technical guidance for schools in England | EHRC](#)

WNC

[Hearing and vision specialist support for children and young people | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

Neuroinclusive Education Network

[Primary Field Guide - Enabling Environments \(Whole School Access\) | Neuroinclusive Education Network](#)

Neuroinclusive Education Network

[Secondary Field Guide - Enabling Environments \(Whole School Access\) | Neuroinclusive Education Network](#)

Expectations of all settings	What this includes/looks like
Resources are allocated appropriately to ensure reasonable adjustments are made and additional needs are met. Quality and impact of support is reviewed.	• Resources are easily accessible to all CYP to promote independence and are clearly labelled using text and images (where appropriate). • CYP have easy access to sensory equipment that they require, e.g. writing slopes, pencil grips, wobble cushions, fidget toys, ear defenders, and weighted blankets. • Resources are clear and uncluttered, labelled using text and images. • Printed documents use a font and size that is clear and easy to read for all. • Coloured backgrounds, paper and overlays are available for CYP who require them. • Visual aids and prompts are used to support the use of spoken language. • Left and right-handed CYP are able to use equipment comfortably. • Physical resources such as PE and Maths equipment are adapted to promote independence e.g. different size balls.
Specific resources and strategies are provided to overcome potential barriers to learning. Increased use of ICT resources	• Tangible apparatus and adapted resources are available and easily accessible for those CYP who require it. • CYP are taught how to use these resources effectively. • Technology is used to support alternatives to written recording and to promote independent learning. • Assistive technology including ICT equipment and software, is available to support alternatives to written recording, communication and reading. • The skills to use specific resources are taught e.g. touch typing. • Homework clubs and adapted revision guides are available

Where a pupil is identified as having SEN, settings/schools should take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in places. This SEN support should take the form of a four-part cycle through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the pupils' needs and what supports the pupil in making good progress and securing good outcomes. This is known as the graduated approach"

Section 6.44, SEND Code of Practice

Class and subject teachers, supported by the senior leadership team, should make regular assessments of progress for all CYP. These should seek to identify CYP making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances.

This can be characterised by progress which:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Fails to match or better the previous rate of progress of CYP
- Fails to close the attainment gap between CYP and their peers
- Widens the attainment gap

For further information, guidance and resources please see:

The Lone SENCo [The Lone SENDCO: Questions and answers for the busy SENDCO : Gary Aubin: Amazon.co.uk: Books](#)

Boxall profile [SEMH Assessment & Emotional Behavioural Toolkit for Children - Interventions, Assessments & Strategies](#)

EEF [Embedding Formative Assessment | EEF](#)

Expectations of all settings	What this includes/looks like
A regular cycle of Assess, Plan, Do, Review is used to ensure that CYP with SEND are making progress	• CYP's strengths and difficulties in learning and behaviour are observed and monitored in a range of environments to inform planning. • Staff are aware of CYP's starting points so that expected progress is made and can be measured. • Gaps are identified clearly, and curriculum adaptations are made in advance to improve outcomes. • Teachers are supported to identify gaps and to plan in anticipations of barriers. • Assessment is used to inform planning and interventions which occur mostly within the classroom environment. • Observation and assessment are used to inform planning and interventions starting from the strengths, interests and what CYP can do. • Consideration is given for individual developmental trends of CYP. Other methods are used to demonstrate holistic progress (e.g. Support plans, case studies, etc). • The impact of interventions is critically evaluated. Alternative approaches are explored to establish whether they may result in better outcomes. • Pupil voice is captured to ensure full participation and understanding of expectations. • CYP are supported in their understanding of how to learn and recognise achievements.
Staff ensure that formative assessment and feedback are a feature of teaching and learning.	• The embedding of formative assessment is derived from evidence-based research. • All staff understand the whole school policy and deliver this with confidence • Marking policies are adapted to take account of individual need of CYP. • Marking is appropriate in supporting CYP to understand where they need to go next. • Class and subject teachers make regular assessments of progress for all CYP and identify those whose progress: ○ Is slower than that of peers from the same baseline ○ Where the attainment gap is not closing and may be widening • A wide range of assessment strategies and tools are used to ensure a thorough understanding of CYP. • Data systems enable easy access by staff to information about the learning and additional needs of CYP. • CYP reflect on their own learning journey on a regular basis • The next steps in CYP's learning journey are clearly identifiable. • The impact of interventions is evaluated and different approaches are explored to ensure best outcomes for CYP

Expertise is in place to manage reasonable examination arrangements (access arrangements) for assessments, national tests and public examinations.

- Access arrangements are offered where appropriate as a normal way of working for CYP in all assessments.
- Teachers and staff are trained to identify when CYP may benefit from an access arrangement.
- Parents and carers are informed of the need for additional support.
- There are opportunities for CYP to practice and refine the access arrangements in place to support overall outcomes.
- Resources and equipment are available to staff to provide access as a normal way of working.
- Please refer to the relevant exam board guidelines.
- Arrangements could include:
 - Rest breaks
 - Use of a reader, scribe or laptop
 - Extra time
- Adapted resources are used in class and assessments

[Teaching: the new reality](#) a Report published in May 2023 identified that the pressures of teaching have changed with an increase in the need to support pastorally, for mental health and with family concerns more than ever. The need to upskill and support staff is a crucial point. Training frameworks now need to reflect changing reality of our learners in schools.

For further information, guidance and resources please see:

Education Endowment Foundation

[Deployment of Teaching Assistants | EEF](#)

Report on Teaching and CPD

[Teaching: the new reality](#)

Whole School SEND CPD offer

[Whole School SEND Home Page | Whole School SEND](#)

Mental Health and Wellbeing in schools

[Mental health resources for teachers and teaching staff](#)

Please visit the Local Offer for up-to-date WNC workshops available for families

Please visit the SENCo Zone Padlet for up-to-date WNC training available for schools and staff



Expectations of all settings	What this includes/looks like
All staff make a positive contribution to progress	• Additional adults are deployed proactively and their impact on the CYP is monitored carefully to ensure progress is supported and maintained. • Additional adults have been trained to understand how to maximise time in the classroom. • There is clear and regular communication between all adults to ensure a consistent and well-informed approach • Teachers are well informed of how to enhance external intervention impact within the daily classroom teaching. • Staff have access to a targeted training programme and SEND features across all topics as a golden thread. • A flexible approach to grouping/seating arrangements and additional support are used to promote independent learning as far as possible. • Strategies taught and used in interventions are integrated into teaching so that CYP can sustain progress within the classroom. • Staff are trained to audit their environment on a regular basis to ensure maximum impact.
There is a considered plan for ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in relation to the needs of the CYP and to ensure SEND is a golden thread through all whole staff training	• There is a planned programme of ongoing CPD in relation to SEND for the whole setting and individual teams and departments. • Best practice is shared within the setting and with other settings in the local authority and its networks • Staff who are responsible for delivering specific interventions should have accessed the appropriate training. • Time is allocated for staff to reflect on, discuss and evaluated their practice in relation to CYP with SEND to create consistency across the setting. • All staff make a positive contribution to the progress of CYP.

Staff collaborate and have effective links with other relevant outside agencies and specialists.

- Staff know when and how to refer for extra support or advice.
- The setting works collaboratively with other professionals who are involved with CYP with SEND.
- All staff are aware of support available at WNC through services such as IIST, SST, EPS Advice received from other professionals is used to inform teaching and learning, and to ensure best outcomes for the CYP with SEND
- Staff engage with the local offer such as SENCo briefings, WNC SEN training and any other SEN meetings.



A practitioner in a pastoral role, alongside well-trained school staff, can have a transformative impact on children and young people (CYP). Their support can mean the difference between CYP attending school regularly or disengaging entirely, and between a family feeling empowered to participate in the education of CYP or remaining disconnected. These professionals play a pivotal role in ensuring that CYP and their families access timely and appropriate interventions, whether within the school environment or through multi-agency collaboration. In essence, they are often the key factor that determines whether a CYP receives not just an education, but a high-quality, inclusive, and supportive learning experience that meets their individual needs and helps them thrive both academically and emotionally.

West Northants Council is committed to this vision as a Therapeutic Thinking council, actively promoting and supporting all schools to become therapeutic thinking trained. This approach underpins a culture of understanding, empathy, and proactive strategies for managing behaviour and emotional wellbeing. For further details on how therapeutic thinking can positively shape school communities and improve outcomes for learners, please refer to the dedicated section on page

For further information, guidance and resources please see:

Pastoral Leadership guide	The Complete Guide to Pastoral Leadership: A compendium of essential knowledge, research and experience for all pastoral leaders in schools by Amy-May Forrester Hachette UK
NICE guidance	Social, emotional and mental wellbeing in primary and secondary education
Therapeutic Thinking	Therapeutic Thinking
Keeping Children Safe in Education	Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK
Anna Freud	Mental Health Training For Schools and Colleges Anna Freud

Expectations of all settings	What this includes/looks like
The setting recognises, and responds to, the need for pastoral support for CYP with SEND, bearing in mind the individual's social and emotional needs and other relevant contextual circumstances	• There is a calm and purposeful environment for learning and whole school ethos where CYP feel they belong, and their contributions are valued. • Safe spaces and key person arrangements are used as a universal approach. • Language used promotes positive relationships and demonstrates unconditional positive regard for CYP (e.g. Relational Approaches). • There is an understanding of the impact that restorative approaches can have on CYP. • Whole school awareness that CYP with SEND are vulnerable to bullying and an appropriate level of support and monitoring is in place. • The RSHE/PSHE curriculum has a focus on developing wellbeing and resilience and an understanding of others. • Ready to learn strategies are employed as part of a teacher's daily repertoire. • Peer awareness and sensitivity towards difference (including SEND) are raised at a whole setting level. Work is done with classes and groups regarding specific needs or conditions as appropriate • Pastoral support arrangements aim to enhance self-esteem, build confidence and enable anxiety management, providing opportunities to use specific approaches, such as buddying, rewards, responsibilities. • Staff listen, acknowledge and respond to concerns in a considered way when supporting families.
CYP are encouraged to celebrate their own differences and be themselves	• There are opportunities for CYP to understand their own needs. • Difference is not seen as a problem and all CYP are fully included across all areas of the school including parents evening, prospectus input, school council and events.

**CYP feels safe and valued.
They know that they can
approach staff and that
their opinions and concerns
are valued.**

- In-school systems are in place to gather the views of CYP (e.g.: School Councils, etc).
- The school council impact whole school development. There is fair representation and equal opportunities.
- Pupil voice is encouraged and acted on. For example, in-school systems seek pupil views on preferences for:
 - activities in non-lesson times (e.g. at break and lunchtimes);
 - behaviour and discipline arrangements;
 - individual views
- CYP voice is encouraged and acted on. e.g. taking action where CYP identify spaces in the school that they feel less safe.
- CYP can identify an agreed safe space within the class/ school and know how to access it.
- CYP can identify and seek out named and trusted adults / key workers when required.
- Opportunities to build social relationships naturally as part of the school day e.g. shared interest clubs or activities.
- Negative attitudes, beliefs and perceptions towards individuals or groups are challenged in the classroom and whole school setting.
- Opportunities to build social relationships naturally as part of the school day e.g. shared interest clubs or activities.
- CYP are consulted on what to do in their free time (e.g. at break and lunchtimes) both inside and outdoors, and are supported, as appropriate, by the provision of activities and opportunities for games and interactions with others.

**All members of the
community are supported
to develop their own
understanding of different
needs and how to embrace
difference**

- There are opportunities for regular assemblies to encourage inclusivity.
- The PSHE curriculum offers opportunities to embrace difference and understand inclusion.

What are Barriers to Learning?

When we talk about barriers to learning and/or wellbeing, this means any factors that may make it difficult for a children and young people (CYP) to achieve as well as they should and develop positive wellbeing.

Barriers can be caused by individual circumstances of CYP, such as their health, development or emotional needs, or by external factors, including their family, community or wider social conditions. They can include [protected characteristics](#). There may also be barriers that CYP face that are specific to the school's context. These may require tailored approaches to reduce their impact on learning and/or wellbeing.

Schools have a responsibility, through statutory duties or government guidance, to address barriers for certain groups of CYP. This includes CYP who are disadvantaged, CYP with SEND and CYP known (or previously known) to children's social care.

[School inspections: frequently asked questions – Ofsted: education](#)

There is no simple mapping between specific barriers and universal 'highly effective' strategies. Effectiveness depends heavily on context: the individual CYP, the environment, the quality of implementation, and on how strategies interact with other factors such as:

- Other interventions or support mechanisms already in place;
- School policy;
- Family circumstances;
- Developmental challenges — for example, evaluating the extent to which the chronological age of CYP, academic attainment, and developmental stage correspond, and identifying any misalignments that may impact learning and participation.

Examples of Barriers to Learning:**Physical barriers** - illness, fatigue, poor eyesight/hearing**Emotional barriers** - anxiety, low confidence, stress, trauma, attachment**Environmental barriers** - noise, poor lighting, lack of resources**Cognitive barriers** - learning difficulties, language challenges**Social barriers** - lack of support, cultural differences, disadvantaged

CYP, environments, and systems vary immensely, therefore what works brilliantly in one setting may be ineffective or even counterproductive in another. Instead, effective practice requires careful assessment of CYP needs including: Understanding the environment, for example what it *allows* a CYP to do and what the environment *prevents* or makes difficult.

High-quality training and implementation.

Ongoing review and adaptation.

Alignment with wider whole-school systems.

Multi-agency working ([Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#))

Why is overcoming barriers to learning important?

Schools and education settings play a pivotal role in the success of CYP. Understanding and addressing barriers to learning is essential for several reasons:

Equity and Inclusion: Ensuring all CYP, regardless of their background or personal challenges, have equal opportunities to succeed.

Improved Academic Outcomes: When barriers are removed, CYP can focus better, engage more deeply with the material, and achieve higher academic performance.

Enhanced Student Well-being: Addressing emotional and psychological barriers contributes to the overall well-being of CYP, creating a healthier learning environment.

Legal and Ethical Responsibilities: Schools and education settings have a duty to provide accessible education to all CYP.

Expectations

Ensuring that there is a robust Assess, Plan, Do Review cycle in place for CYP is vital when addressing barriers to learning.

National Information

[Pupil Premium Strategy: We prioritise understanding our pupils' key barriers to learning – Teaching](#)

[A School's Guide to Implementation guidance report | Education Endowment Foundation](#)

[Every child achieving and thriving \(HTML version\) - GOV.UK](#)

[Schools identify low literacy skills and poor attendance as the... | EEF](#)

[New Ofsted report warns of barriers to academic progress for children in care, despite positive work of schools and colleges - GOV.UK](#)

[School inspection: toolkit, operating guides and information - GOV.UK](#)

[Who is losing learning March 25](#)

[Addressing barriers to learning through priority student meetings: A case study: My College](#)

[Improving Behaviour in Schools | EEF](#)

[Welcome to Barriers to Education](#)

[Develop your strategy | EEF](#)

[Behaviour in schools - GOV.UK](#)

[Mental health and behaviour in schools](#)

[The trainee teacher behavioural toolkit: a summary - GOV.UK Behaviour-and-Mental-Health-in-Schools-Full-Report.pdf](#)

[Back to School: Pupil Wellbeing - Edurio](#)

[Timpson Review of School Exclusion](#)

[Tackling Child Poverty: Developing Our Strategy \(HTML\) - GOV.UK](#)
[Tips for poverty-proofing your school | School Impact Awards](#)

Local Authority and Partnership Agencies Information

[TaMHS Building Blocks | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

[Working with the Educational Psychology Service | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

[Virtual School - Training | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

[Social Emotional and Mental Health \(SEMH\) and wellbeing support for education settings | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

[Attendance and behaviour support for schools | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

[School Attendance Support Service \(SASS\) - WNC | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

[Mental Health Support Teams | NHFT](#)

[Specialist SEND Teacher Team | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

[Family Help – Professionals | Northampton Children's Trust](#)

Please visit the SENCo Zone Padlet for further information about Therapeutic Thinking



Assess – Identify Strengths and Barriers to Learning	Plan - Identify Intentions Linked to Barriers to Learning
Key Questions for School Leaders	Information for Therapeutic Thinking Schools
Environmental Factors	
• How does this CYP or group learn best in different physical spaces (e.g., front, side, individual desk, shared table, standing desk, movement friendly area)? • What do we know about their sensory preferences (light, noise, temperature, visual clutter, seating type)? • Where do they feel safest and most regulated in school? • Are current classroom layouts flexible enough to accommodate different learning profiles? • What environmental triggers might reduce engagement (e.g., crowded spaces, transitions, noise levels)? • Have we observed how the environment impacts their ability to start, sustain, and finish a task? • Do staff know each CYP's preferred learning environment, and is this shared across the adults who teach them?	Therapeutic Thinking Schools may wish to consider the following from the training materials: • Slides that focus on the function of the behaviour. • They refer to all environmental factors or stimuli that help to understand why the behaviour is occurring. • Consider auditing your Therapeutic Thinking approach using the Culture and Ethos Self-Assessment tool: • School Culture (Slides 54-56 Sept 2025)
Interactions and Relational Factors	
• How does this CYP prefer to work with adults, for example: close by, at a distance, checking in discreetly, or through a signal system? • What adult behaviours help them feel supported rather than singled out? • Which peers do they collaborate well with? Which relationships create stress?	Therapeutic Thinking Schools may wish to consider the following from the training materials: • Therapeutic classroom management. (Slide 366 Sept 2025) • Relational practices. (Slides 41 – 53 Sept 2025)

Assess – Identify Strengths and Barriers to Learning	Plan - Identify Intentions Linked to Barriers to Learning				
Key Questions for School Leaders	Information for Therapeutic Thinking Schools				
Interactions and Relational Factors					
- Does the CYP need consistency of key adults, or do they respond well to a range of staff? - Are staff aware of how the CYP interprets social cues and teacher expectations? - How are positive relationships nurtured across the day, especially at transitions? - Are there times when adult presence increases anxiety? - How is relationship information recorded and shared across the team?	Training slides covering relationships, restorative practices, risk factors, protective factors and anxiety analysis tools: 82, 143, 146, 153-154, 208-209, 212, 217, 320, 321)				
Mental Health, Wellbeing and Emotional Factors					
- What is the level of impact on the following areas of functioning? - Sleep - Diet - Relationships (family, peers, school staff, other) - Attendance - Attainment - Mood - Hobbies / interests - Engagement - Communication - Where impact is identified what is the; - Frequency? - Duration? - Intensity? - Nature of impact? - How have you considered and assess safety factors? Having considered and assessed safety factors consider the following: - Are there relationships that provide a sense of belonging, good attachments, strong support networks, positive role models, being understood and valued, and freedom to express true self? - Does the CYP demonstrate skills in problem solving and effective coping strategies? - Are there situational factors, historic and current that support safety such as access to support, aspirations and plans for the future?	Therapeutic Thinking Schools may wish to consider the following from the training materials: - Belonging and mental health. (Slides 46, 74, 75, 82, 121, 144, 148-152, 155 Sept 2025) - Wellbeing. (Slides 14-19, 139 Sept 2025) - Training slides covering relationships, restorative practices, risk factors, protective factors and anxiety analysis tools: 82, 143, 146, 153-154, 208-209, 212, 217, 320, 321) - Graduated response and the associated tools: The Graduated Response – Universal Behaviour and Belonging Curriculum Provision <table> <tr> <td>Universal Behaviour Curriculum</td><td> - Check existing knowledge, skills and understanding. - Complete pupil induction (routines and valued behaviours). - Establish a realistic starting point. - Establish realistic next steps. - Identify opportunities for teaching and learning linked to real-world experiences. - Provide guided and supported practice of skills. - Review progress. - Refer to Behaviour Policy. </td></tr> <tr> <td>Universal Plus Behaviour Policy</td><td> - Check if the identified behaviour is covered in policy. - Support the pupil in line with policy. - Monitor and record the impact of policy on progress. - Review progress. - Implement further analysis and planning. </td></tr> </table>	Universal Behaviour Curriculum	- Check existing knowledge, skills and understanding. - Complete pupil induction (routines and valued behaviours). - Establish a realistic starting point. - Establish realistic next steps. - Identify opportunities for teaching and learning linked to real-world experiences. - Provide guided and supported practice of skills. - Review progress. - Refer to Behaviour Policy.	Universal Plus Behaviour Policy	- Check if the identified behaviour is covered in policy. - Support the pupil in line with policy. - Monitor and record the impact of policy on progress. - Review progress. - Implement further analysis and planning.
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Universal Plus Behaviour Policy	- Check if the identified behaviour is covered in policy. - Support the pupil in line with policy. - Monitor and record the impact of policy on progress. - Review progress. - Implement further analysis and planning.				

Assess – Identify Strengths and Barriers to Learning	Plan - Identify Intentions Linked to Barriers to Learning
Key Questions for School Leaders	Information for Therapeutic Thinking Schools
Mental Health, Wellbeing and Emotional Factors	
- Where safety factors are absent, what support could be introduced? What support is needed? - Given that the presence of safety factors is likely to reduce ‘risk’ and absence of safety factors may indicate increase in ‘risk’, what does the current balance of safety factors suggest about the level of risk for CYP?	
Cognitive Factors	
- Where does assessment data tell us about this CYP’s or group of CYP outcomes. Consider this in terms of attainment and progress, in key areas of learning (early years) or academic subjects (primary and secondary) against national averages. What are the strengths of CYP, interests, motivators, and hooks for learning? - Do CYP have foundational knowledge? For example: Reading fluency and comprehension, basic understanding of number, handwriting SPAG, Writing (add more). What actions have been taken to address issues that have been identified? - What academic tasks cause disengagement (e.g., long texts, extended writing, multi-step instructions)? - What effective strategies reduce cognitive load without lowering expectations? - What is the preferred learning style for CYP? - Are there curriculum areas that consistently trigger avoidance or anxiety? Why? - How do we ensure the CYP can demonstrate understanding in a way that suits their profile? - What is the <i>specific</i> barrier? For example: task design, language level, pace, independence, or prior knowledge?	Therapeutic Thinking Schools may wish to consider the following from the training materials: - Inclusion Circles (Slides 121-128 Sept 2025) - Therapeutic Continuum. (Slides 130-131 Sept 2025) - ACES (Slides 141 Sept 2025) - Therapeutic Plan (Slides 172-185 Sept 2025)  The Graduated Response – Personalised Behaviour and Belonging Approach Targeted Early Prognosis - Describe the behaviour factually and unemotionally. - Gather appropriate and authentic pupil voice. - Gather information from parents/carers and staff. - Gather information from multi-agency colleagues. - Ensure collected information informs planning. - Set a review date. - Review progress. - Implement further analysis and planning. Targeted Plus Predict, Prevent & Progress - Update and review all information within Targeted. - Consider involvement of multi-agency colleagues. - Complete Risk Calculation. - Identify protective consequences. - Identify educational consequences. - Analyse dysregulation and values and beliefs (subconscious and conscious). - Complete severity analysis for relevant variables. - Create a Predict, Prevent & Progress plan. - Set a review date. - Review progress. - Implement further analysis and planning. Specialist Therapeutic Plan - Update and review all information within Targeted and Targeted Plus. - Consider involvement of multi-agency colleagues. - Complete the Therapeutic Tree for the individual pupil. - Complete a detailed Therapeutic Plan. - Set a review date. - Consider group dynamic options. - Review progress. - Involve multi-agency colleagues in review and identifying next steps.

Assess – Identify Strengths and Barriers to Learning	Plan - Identify Intentions Linked to Barriers to Learning
Key Questions for School Leaders	Information for Therapeutic Thinking Schools
Behaviour Factors	
• What early warning signs indicate a CYP is becoming dysregulated? • What patterns do we notice in behaviour across subjects, times of day, or adult interactions? • What routines help the CYP settle, transition, and complete tasks? • How might behaviour expectations and routines be adapted? • What adaptations (visuals, checklists, reduced language, planned breaks) have had the most effective impact? • What current strategies does the CYP respond positively to? • Are they internalising behaviours or externalising behaviours? • Is the driver dysregulation or values and beliefs or both? • What skills does the CYP need to develop if the behaviour is a result of dysregulation? • What knowledge does the CYP need to gain if the behaviour is driven by values and beliefs?	Therapeutic Thinking Schools may wish to consider the following from the training materials: • Inclusion Circles, identifying internalising and externalising behaviours (Slides 121-128 Sept 2025) • Behaviour consequences: Educational consequences and Protective consequences (Slides 196-205 Sept 2025) • Refer to the 'Behaviour and Belonging Curriculum Framework' and associated Therapeutic Thinking Tools. • Dysregulation versus Values and Beliefs. (Slides 90, 240-244 Sept 2025). These slides provide further analysis which may be required using the dysregulation and values and beliefs checklists. • Documents to Refer to: • The Graduated Response • Early Prognosis blank version, example and PDF guidance document • Risk Calculator blank document and PDF example • Dysregulation and Values and Belief checklists and PDF example • Anxiety analysis blank version, example and PDF guidance document • Predict, Prevent, Progress document • Therapeutic Tree blank version, example and PDF guidance document • Therapeutic Plan blank version, example and PDF guidance document

Parent and Pupil Voice Factors

- What is the most effective way of gathering pupil voice for each individual? Have we captured the voice of CYP in multiple ways (conversation, drawing, choice cards, observation)?
- What strategies ensure that the CYP feels heard, understood, and safe in school?
- What does the CYP say helps them learn? What do they say gets in the way?
- How does the CYP like adults to approach them when they're stuck, worried, or overwhelmed?
- What are the parent/carers priorities, concerns, and hopes for their CYP learning experience?
- How do we ensure parents feel their insights are influencing provision meaningfully?
- How regularly do we check whether strategies are still working for the CYP?

Therapeutic Thinking Schools may wish to consider the following from the training materials:

VIDEO: Why am I Rude? Link to watch on YouTube - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=waeRP6jzW_U

VIDEO: Childhood Trauma and The Brain. link to watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYBUY1kZpf8>

Slides 66 – 71 from the Therapeutic Thinking Training materials regarding helpful and unhelpful feelings, negative and positive experiences and key behavioural definitions.

Documents:

Child Voice PDF

Restorative Debrief Visuals PDF

Social Factors

- Are family circumstances influencing learning, behaviour, or attendance—and are we responding appropriately?
- Who are the CYP's positive peer connections? Who helps them feel safe or confident?
- Are there peers they avoid due to conflict, anxiety, or past negative experiences?
- Does the CYP struggle to initiate or maintain friendships?
- How well does the CYP interpret social cues (e.g., body language, tone, humour)?
- Are they reluctant to speak in class due to fear of judgement or misunderstanding?
- Do they need support with turn-taking, conversation skills, or repairing misunderstandings?
- Are there cultural or communication factors influencing their social interactions?
- How does the CYP cope in unstructured times such as break, lunch, corridors, or lining up?
- Are certain parts of the school day more socially stressful than others?
- How do social situations affect their emotional regulation?
- Are home or community social circumstances influencing the CYP's ability to engage socially at school?

Therapeutic Thinking Schools may wish to consider the following from the training materials:

- Use the Dysregulation and Values and Belief documents containing the checklists and PDF example
- Dysregulation versus Values and Beliefs. (Slides 90, 240-244 Sept 2025). These slides provide further analysis which may be required using the dysregulation and values and beliefs checklists.
- Emotional literacy (Slides 90-107 Sept 2025)
- Inclusion Circles, identifying internalising and externalising behaviours (Slides 121-128 Sept 2025)
- Reward versus Bribery, Understanding Discipline, (Slides 133, 166, 185-186, 190 – 194, 206 Sept 2025)
- Where is your school on the Therapeutic Continuum? (Slides 130-131 Sept 2025)

Preparation for Adulthood is important for all children and young people (CYP). Some CYP will need additional support for transitions Preparation for adulthood is a crucial part of planning and support for young people with SEND. From Year 9 onwards, EHC Plan Reviews focus on preparing for adulthood outcomes (SEND Code of Practice: para 8.10).

‘ Planning must be centered around the individual and explore the child or young person’s aspirations and abilities. It should include support to help them prepare for higher education or employment, independent living, participating in society and being as healthy as possible in adult life.’

(SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 years, 2015, Section 8.7)

For further guidance and support : -

WNC Local Offer

[Preparation for adulthood | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

Council for Disabled Children (CDC)

[Preparing For Adulthood](#)

NASEN

[SEND review guide PFA WEB \(1\).pdf](#)

National Development Team for Inclusion

[Preparing for Adulthood | NDTi](#)

Government guidance

[Thematic reviews of preparation for adulthood arrangements in local areas - GOV.UK](#)

Quality in Careers Website

[Quality in Careers - National Quality Standard for careers education and guidance](#)



In the **Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015)** the four key principles of **Preparation for Adulthood** are outlined : -

Employment and/or Higher Education : supporting young people in exploring various employment and/or higher education opportunities and offering guidance for self-employment.

Independent Living: upskilling young people to have choice, control, and freedom over their lives.

Participation in Communities : supporting young people to engage in and contribute to their local and wider communities, as well as enabling them to form positive friendships and relationships.

Health: supporting young people to be as healthy as possible in adult life.

These are collectively referred to as the **Preparing for Adulthood (PfA)** outcomes. While the PfA outcomes seem tailored for older CYP, particularly those of secondary school age, the Code of Practice (2015) emphasises that preparation for adulthood should begin in the early years.

The foundation for successful transition into adulthood for all CYP is laid early, through a planned and intentional approach to teaching and learning. This approach should foster CYP's ability to make decisions and involve them in shaping their educational experiences. It is crucial that preparation for adulthood is integrated into all educational settings and their curriculum offer.

Primary Schools - Preparation for Adulthood Guidance

- Build aspirations early. Encourage CYP to talk about what they enjoy, what they are good at and what they hope for in the future.
- Provide activities that help CYP to explore their personal interests, strengths and skills.
- Support CYP in increasing their self-belief and confidence ; for example, celebrate individual achievements and talents regularly.
- Provide educational opportunities for CYP to understand the different sectors of work. For example, help CYP to understand different jobs through storytelling, role play and themed days. Invite visitors to deliver inspiring, age-appropriate career talks (e.g. police officer, farmer, nurse, artist, engineer etc)
- Include the teaching of employability skills in programmes of study.
- Offer trips and community projects that help CYP understand and interact with their local area.
- Encourage healthy routines and physical activity. Support children in emotionally regulating independently such as providing emotional coaching interventions
- The Quality in Careers Consortium offers a careers education quality award and resources for primary schools :
Primary Schools - Quality in Careers

Statutory Guidance – Preparation for Adulthood

The Department for Education's Statutory Guidance document : - [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers - GOV.UK](#) (updated 8th May 2025)

The guidance applies to:

- all young people in school from year 7 to year 13
- all learners in colleges and Independent Training Providers up to and including the age of 18
- learners aged 19 to 25 with a current education, health and care plan (EHCP) in place under section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014

In May 2025, the DfE confirmed that all schools, colleges and Independent Training Providers must use [the updated Gatsby Benchmarks](#).

The Gatsby Benchmarks are eight standards that ensure that these educational settings provide high quality careers education covering information, experiences and personalised guidance.

Statutory Guidance – Work Experience

From September 2026, it will be statutory for pupils in secondary schools to have 10 days or 50 hours of meaningful work experience.

Work Experience Guarantee :

The updated DfE statutory guidance : [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers - GOV.UK](#) , includes a Work Experience Guarantee. The guidance applies to all pupils in Year 7 to Year 11. The Work Experience Guarantee states that every young person should complete 10 days or 50 hours of meaningful work experience during their time in school.

The extract below is taken from [the updated Gatsby Benchmarks](#) :

6 EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACES	Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of workplaces to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks.	• By the age of 16, every pupil should have had meaningful experiences of workplaces. • By the age of 18, every pupil should have had at least one further meaningful experience.
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Secondary and Post 16 - Preparation for Adulthood Guidance

- Provide careers guidance, with targeted support, to ensure CYP can access advice that is appropriate to their individual needs and aspirations.
- Provide opportunities for high quality work experience and encourage CYP to pursue work that is relevant to their interests and aspirations.
- Use person centered planning tools, such as vocational profiles, to find out what kind of job a young person may be interested in ; these planning tools will help to inform the range of work experience that they do. Provide taster courses and mentoring to support young people in their transition to post-16 provision.
- Include the teaching of different aspects of healthy living in programmes of study to enable young people to manage their own physical, mental and emotional health as they move into adulthood. Provide support, such as emotional coaching, to help young people to emotionally regulate independently.
- Provide support for young people to develop and maintain positive friendships and relationships.
- Provide opportunities for young people to participate in the community within their educational setting and in their wider communities.
- Incorporate explicit teaching of independent living skills into programmes of study.

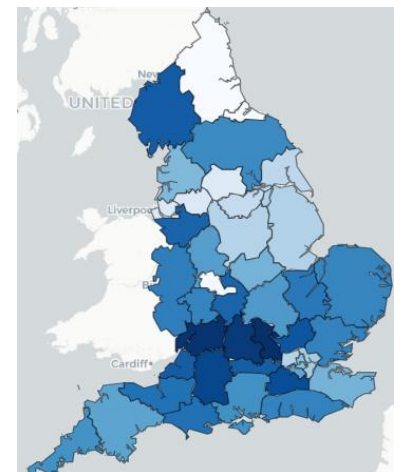
Skills England : Link to online Dashboard : [Local Skills Dashboard](#)

The *Skills England* website is a very useful resource when supporting young people in developing skills and preparing for their future.

This is an official government data dashboard, owned and used by *Skills England*, to show jobs, skills and labour market demand at both local and national level.

The dashboard provides the following information : -

- What jobs exist locally and nationally
- Skills required by employers
- What is happening in the local jobs market
- Which jobs, sectors and skills are expected to grow, remain or decline based on national and local labour market evidence.



It is challenging to get school transitions right for all children and young people, (CYP), whether they are moving across the school environment or to a new provision or phases. When transitions are planned carefully, CYP with SEND can thrive if there is an inclusive approach with activities such as additional visit or scaffolds for new routines.

“An effective approach to supporting children through school transition is likely to involve a combination of strategies delivered to all pupils. Additional strategies for vulnerable pupils should be delivered on a case by case basis according to their needs.” Teacher Toolkit 2023.

Transitions include:

- moving around the setting
- preparing for weekends, the start of holidays and start of term
- moving from lesson to lesson
- changing from structured to unstructured times
- moving from one activity to the next within a lesson
- changes of staff - permanent and temporary
- special events: visitors, visits, celebrations
- life events: birth of a sibling, change in parenting arrangements e.g. change in parent/carers relationship status, loss and bereavement or contact visits

-Staff are aware of those who will need additional support for all or most transitions and plan for these transitions.

This includes CYP who:

- have insecure attachment, including but not limited to looked after or previously looked after children; Children with a social worker; Service children.
- have social communication difficulty



- are neuro-diverse (ND)
- suffered trauma, loss, or bereavement
- are anxious

All CYP can be vulnerable at times of change and a successful start in a new setting requires careful planning and preparation. All educational settings must adhere to the Equality Act (2010) which means they must make 'reasonable adjustments' so as not to place learners at a disadvantage.

Good transition should enable children to:

- Develop new friendships and improve self-esteem and confidence
- Show interest and engagement in school and in their schoolwork
- Get used to new routines quickly
- Experience curriculum continuity and an appropriate level of challenge and support in their learning

Effective transition relies on good planning and good communication. For CYP with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), additional planning will be required to ensure that transition is successful. Other groups may also require a higher level of support, this may include:

- Families with English as an additional language (EAL)
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families
- CYP in care
- CYP known to social care
- CYP with pastoral needs (e.g. parental separation, bereavement, friendship issues)
- CYP with mental health needs (e.g. anxiety)

- CYP with medical needs
- CYP with long-term absence from education

Feeder and receiving schools need to collaborate closely with CYP and their families to ensure a positive transition. Schools should identify a transition lead in both settings who will be responsible for co-ordinating the process. This may be the SENCo, year leader or another senior leader.

Transition Leads should:

- Keep the CYP at the centre of transition planning
- Create a transition plan with clear actions and timescales
- Plan how to involve parents and carers and ensure they are provided with relevant information and have the opportunity to share their own views in good time and in accessible formats

The Education Endowment Fund (EEF) also provide a school transition tool: [EEF Blog: Supporting pupils through transitions – a trio of... | EEF](#)

Transition is a time of change between classes, year groups and settings. Research evidence is largely focussed on the move from primary to secondary however principles can be learned for other potentially vulnerable transition points. Several studies have shown a dip in attainment coinciding with transition, especially in literacy and numeracy. EEF 2021.

The Department for Education (DfE) have produced guidance on transition which focusses on the early years:

“ There is currently limited national evidence on how schools and early years settings plan and deliver transition into reception. To address this gap, we adopted a case study approach to explore how transition is planned, delivered and experienced at a local level across a range of geographic and community contexts. This document draws on the practice of 10 schools and 4 private, voluntary and independent (PVI) settings in England. The schools were selected for their sustained good level of development (GLD) outcomes, and their coherent, relationship-based approaches to transition. The PVIs selected are working closely with their Stronger Practice Hubs and are known by them to contribute successfully to transition into reception.” Getting Children Ready for Reception April 2026

[Getting children ready for reception: How schools and early years settings can work together with families to support transition into reception](#)

The Open University have a free course to support early years to primary transition: [Listening to young children: supporting transition | OpenLearn - Open University](#)

Listening to young children: supporting transition, explores ways of listening to children in order to support their experiences of changes or transitions. Such transitions can involve many dimensions, including familiarisation with new cultural practices, the development of new relationships and potentially a shift in identity, for example, from being a 'nursery child' to being a 'pupil'. The course will also explore how listening to children as they go through such fundamental transitions can enable adults to personalise support, and ensure children can become confident, active participants in a new setting.

‘The Teaching Blog’ - A Department for Education blog for teachers, by teachers provides a transition case study from a Tanfield School. Published in February 2026, this blog is called: [The value of transition – Teaching](#) This is also mentioned as a case study in the White Paper with an accompanying video: [Video case study of Tanfield School](#)

The DfE ‘Every Child Achieving and Thriving’ White Paper February 2026 offers a series of case studies around transition: [Every child achieving and thriving \(HTML version\) - GOV.UK](#)

This paper talks about the need for *‘strong transitions from early years, between schools and into further education, study and work.’* In particular: *‘improving the transitions through each phase of education, strengthening partnerships between nurseries and schools, and developing excellence in key stage 3.’*



Below are some case studies from the White Paper which mention transition:

Case study: Strengthening transitions into reception for children with SEND

Over the past few years, leaders at Front Lawn Primary Academy have focused on building trust with families and joint working with early years settings to support transitions into reception. The SENCO and early years foundation stage (EYFS) lead visit all feeder early years settings to observe children and collect detailed information on communication, sensory needs, toileting, sleep routines and regulation strategies. Feeder nurseries receive book bags and school jumpers for role-play areas, helping children with communication or sensory challenges become familiar with routines and school identity.

Transition events are informal, enabling families to meet the SENCO, school nurse, pastoral team and teaching staff on a one-to-one basis. Events such as teddy bears' picnics provide low-pressure opportunities for children to explore the environment. Reception staff conduct structured home visits to understand each child's context, build trust with families, and agree on early SEND support plans where applicable.

This approach ensures early support before a child's entry into reception, helping the school identify children's needs promptly. By addressing emerging issues early, children's development is supported, and potential concerns can be effectively managed without the need for escalation. Families report feeling informed and supported.

Case study: Inclusive practice in schools

Tanfield School is a secondary school in County Durham which provides a range of support for children with SEND, particularly around transitions. For children with SEND, the school works closely with their primary school to understand their needs and put in place support for when they begin, such as specialist group interventions for literacy and numeracy. This support can start as early as Year 4, with their school SENCO offering support such as information evenings, transition days, summer school, online hub access and additional visits from years 4 to 6. Tanfield also has Year Managers that are dedicated to offering pastoral support to children and families to make the transition as smooth as possible, such as support on uniform, homework or wellbeing. This support extends throughout their time in school: inclusive high-quality teaching is regarded as foundational for student success, particularly for children with SEND. To ensure learning is accessible to all, adaptations are made according to children's individual needs, such as changes to teaching strategies, adjustments to the curriculum, or the use of recommended classroom aids. Tanfield has a high proportion of disadvantaged students, but through their welcoming and engaging ethos, their students exceed academically. Absence is lower than the national and local authority averages, and outcomes are well above national and local averages, with an Attainment 8 score of 57.5 compared to 46.0 nationally and 44.1 for their local authority. Tanfield School is also partnered with a school through the RISE programme to support continued improvement.

Case study: Sharing best practice to improve attendance

Ninestiles, an Academy, attended the Breaking Down Barriers to Opportunity: Transforming Attendance conference in March, where attendees were encouraged to take a support first approach to absence, working in partnership with families. One key step is a distributional approach to analysing absence data. This means looking at all levels of absence, not just the lowest, to spot children that drop through absence bands quickly, and identify trends so that help can be provided earlier.

The best practice event offered Ninestiles the opportunity to take stock of their own practice around attendance and apply learning in their own setting. Using the new approach to data, they can target interventions to drive up attendance across the whole school community. The school works intensively and early with feeder primary schools to support children through the transition to secondary school. They build relationships with children and families over the summer and offer practical support with transport and uniform to remove barriers to attendance.

The school has reported that for the first half term for 2025, when comparing to similar schools, their attendance position moved from 17th to 4th. The current year 7 attendance is the highest for any year 7 cohort since the pandemic.



Expectations of all settings	Strategies that can help	Resources
Support is in place for routine and life transitions when required.	- Safe spaces are available within the room or an identified area. Plans are made for unstructured times: safe spaces are available; there are structured alternatives such as games club or use of the library for vulnerable CYP. This will reduce triggers around transitions ensures that these experiences are positive for CYP which in turn ensures they feel safe in their setting. - A variety of different timers can be used with pupils to measure time. - Opportunities for periods of respite using withdrawal to smaller groups. This might include self-directed/individual time-out. - Alternative activities, structures or routines are in place dependent on individual needs. - Use of visuals and resources such as social stories to support transitions ensures all children understand how to transition which in turn promotes independence.	How to create and use a safe space in schools : Mentally Healthy Schools Responding to stressful situations toolkit : Mentally Healthy Schools 'Using Timers to Support Children and Young People' can be found on the SENDCo Zone Padlet  The Teacher Toolkit offers 10 Tips For Successful School Transitions - TeacherToolkit Transition For Pupils With Additional Needs - TeacherToolkit Please refer to the Communication and Interaction and/or Cognition and Learning sections in Part 2 of this framework for examples of how to use visuals effectively to support children and young people. Social story examples can be found on the SENDCo Padlet 



Procedures are in place for ensuring smooth progression within and between settings, particularly during all transition phases, including on entry and exit.

- Information is actively sought and shared about CYP to support successful transitions and manage change both within the setting and beyond.
- This information should also include and be available for the CYP's parents/carers, other colleagues within the setting and receiving or previous settings as required.
- Staff are aware of CYP who need additional support while transitions and adjustments are made, e.g. additional visits to a new setting/classroom with a familiar trusted adult, creating social stories.
- For CYP with additional needs, a SEND Transition Plan should be co-produced by the exiting and receiving setting and parent/carer and CYP
- The school SENDCo and team co-ordinate a whole school approach to supporting transitions.
- Information is actively shared with all staff and includes key information about CYP including suitable learning approaches, supportive strategies, and any concerns.
- All staff have easy access to CYP information via appropriate whole school systems.
- For any CYP needing an enhanced transition a team around the child process is used to identify the universal approaches that are in place prior to targeted support. Staff are clear on the support that they can offer.
- Positive transitions between settings where information is shared effectively ensures continued appropriate levels of support where CYP are consistently getting what they need.

[Information summary for transition | Nasen](#)

[Working with the Educational Psychology Service | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

Please follow this link to locate 'The Assistant Educational Psychologist Offer' which includes transition.

An example of a 'Transition Provision Overview' document can be found on the SENDCo Zone Padlet



The resources below are helpful to support the transition of vulnerable learners from primary to secondary school. Each resource has a brief description of its purpose and the link to access it.

Parents

- Moving on... suggestions for busy families with a CYP with special educational needs moving on to secondary school – guidance for parents on supporting the transition of their child with SEN to secondary school. [Moving on: a guide for pupils with special educational needs moving on to secondary school | Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities](#)
- Young Minds: Transition tips for parents – top ten tips to help parents support their CYP through the transition between primary and secondary school. [Supporting school transitions | Resources | YoungMinds](#)

Procedures are in place for ensuring smooth progression within and between settings, particularly during all transition phases, including on entry and exit.		CYP School concerns questionnaire – a questionnaire to gain child viewpoints on their concerns about a new school. Information, Downloads and Resources UCL Psychology and Language Sciences - UCL – University College London Find Your Feet: Child Resource – booklet for children to help them prepare for secondary school, address their worries, and identify resilience factors. Supporting school transitions Resources YoungMinds Suggested books for primary children about transition: www.sla.org.uk/Services/Public/News/Articles/2024/Radio-4-book-club-transitions.aspx
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When developing this Inclusive Provision Toolkit (IPT), we spoke to a number of parents and carers about what they saw as effective transition from year 6 to year 7. Below are the key points that they raised as being significantly important regarding transition:

Key Themes	Strategies that may help
Wellbeing and Connection	Relational led support plans Support plan emphasises emotional intelligence and empathy ensuring that CYP feel heard and understood. Promoting Social Interaction Strategies like pairing friends or supportive groupings reduce anxiety and strengthen peer relationships.
Listening and Relationships	Welcoming Children and Young People Personal greetings at classroom doors create a sense of belonging and emotional readiness for CYP. Praise and Acknowledgement Purposeful praise enhances self-worth by recognising personal growth and academic accomplishment. Inclusive Learning Culture A culture of respect and recognition motivates CYP and creates an inclusive learning environment.
Parent/Carer and Community Voice	Collaborative Conversation Platforms Schools host open forums and parent/carers groups to foster conversation and information sharing among staff, parents and carers. Transition Support Approach Use of transition packs to support CYP identified as facing social challenges allows for proactive planning for support strategies during school transitions. Building Supportive Networks Engaging parents/carers and community creates a supportive network that strengthens inclusive and responsive education for all CYP.

Fairness and Practical Inclusion	Flexible Uniform Adaptations Flexibility in uniform policies helps some CYP feel comfortable and included without losing their identity or wellbeing. Shared Staff Responsibility All staff members share responsibility through effective communication to support every CYP's needs as a whole. Creating Well Rounded Support Integrating educational, emotional and social support creates a nurturing framework which is child centred.
Transitions and Ongoing Support	Gradual Reduction of Support If a CYP requires planned support prior to and during transition, care should be taken to decrease this gradually. The aim is to maintain ongoing stability even after the transition period. Recognising Hidden Vulnerabilities Being aware that CYP who appear to be coping may face internal struggles, especially with mental health. Tailored Ongoing Support Support should wherever possible be suited to the needs of CYP to ensure stability and resilience. Monitoring and Adaptation Schools should closely monitor transitions and adapt support to prevent set backs and promote success.

Part 2

Support for the four broad areas of need and what should be Inclusive Provision



The Four Broad Areas of Need

While every child and young person (CYP) is unique, the SEND Code of Practice provides us with four "lenses" to help identify where a CYP may require support. This section breaks down Communication and Interaction, Cognition and Learning, Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), and Hearing, Vision, Medical and Physical needs. For each area, you will find a menu of strategies and adjustments that are considered to be inclusive provision. These are not a checklist, but a starting point for the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle, helping you to refine your universal offer and meet specific profiles of need with confidence.

In West Northamptonshire, we recognise that these four areas often overlap; a CYP with communication difficulties may also experience social-emotional challenges. Therefore, these pages should be used as a flexible toolkit to build a holistic profile of a CYP's strengths and barriers. By implementing the strategies outlined here at the Graduated Response stage, practitioners can provide timely, evidence-based support that may prevent needs from escalating. This proactive approach ensures that the right support is delivered at the right time, maximizing the impact of our local mainstream provision.



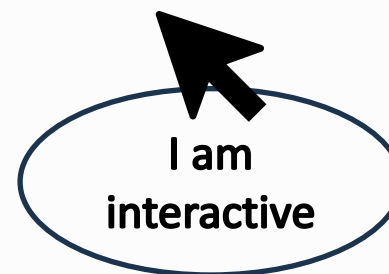
The Four Broad Areas of Need

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Communication
and Interaction

Cognition and
Learning



Social,
Emotional and
Mental Health

Hearing, Vision,
Medical and
Physical Needs



The SEND Code of Practice (6.28-6.29) defines children and young people (CYP) with Communication and Interaction needs as having *“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 they do not understand or use social rules of communication. The profile for every child with SLCN is different and their needs may change over time. They may have difficulty with one, some or all of the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives. 6.29 Children and young people with ASD, including Asperger’s Syndrome and Autism, are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction. They may also experience difficulties with language, communication and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others”*

In primary and secondary settings, it is essential that staff recognise the importance of early identification and respond with appropriate support to reduce barriers to learning and participation. CYP may present with a wide range of communication profiles, and these can change over time or vary depending on context, emotional state, or sensory environment.

A CYP may have strengths in one area of communication but experience challenges in another, such as understanding abstract language, expressing emotions, or managing social situations. Difficulties in communication and interaction can also be linked to other areas of need, including cognition and learning, social and emotional development, and sensory processing. This section outlines strategies that should be ordinarily available in all mainstream classrooms to support inclusive practice.



For further information and advice:

NASEN

[Home page | Nasen](#)

National Autistic Society

[National Autistic Society](#)

Neuroinclusive Education Network

[Neuroinclusive Education Network](#)

Afasic

[Home - Afasic](#)

Communication Matters

[Home - Communication Matters](#)

Northamptonshire Health – Children’s Speech and Language Therapy

[Children’s Therapy Services - Speech & Language Therapy Team | NHFT](#)

Speech and Language UK

[Educators and professionals - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives](#)

Speech, Language & Communication Framework

[Home - SLCF - The Communication Trust](#)

ICAN Charity

[ICAN CHARITY](#)

WNC Local offer

[Local Offer: A Quick Guide to Speech and Language Therapy - WNC | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

Speech and Language

[Register for our What Works database - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives](#)

PDA society

[Education - professional practice - PDA Society](#)

Developmental Language Disorder

[Developmental Language Disorder \(DLD\)](#)



Areas of Difficulty What you may see : -	Suggested Provision What strategies can help...	Resources
CYP may have difficulties saying what they want to, and being understood so they might: - Be anxious when communicating verbally - Express frustration as they can't express themselves and their behaviour may seem challenging - May not be completely understood by others - Have difficulties with phonics and be unable to make sounds - Make speech sound errors impacting on spelling skills - Be reluctant to speak. Appear 'stuck' but won't ask for help - Be more reliant on non-verbal means of communication, e.g. body language, gestures, facial expression	- Modelling language – If the CYP says a word or sound incorrectly, model back using the target sound. - Allow time for CYP to process and respond (10 second rule) - Introduce a variety of language through rhymes, songs, good quality texts - All attempts to speak are supported and valued - Providing an additional or alternative methods of communicating e.g. use of technology (Assistive Technology, Voice output communication aids), symbol communication (aided language boards or books, word boards), signing and gestures (Makaton, Signalong) - Offer visual prompts to support communicative attempts including objects of reference, photos, picture symbols and the written word depending on developmental level. - Ensure use of visuals is consistent between school and home - Infuse motivating topics and learning materials to encourage and promote engagement and a desire to communicate - Offer opportunities for CYP to respond/make choices within a range of activities - Ask questions at the right level for their understanding using Blank's level of questioning. - Adults to consider the environment and limit distractions where possible. - Adults should model grammatically correct spoken language without the expectation for the CYP to repeat it - Adults should allow time for CYP to speak without interruption, sentence finishing or impatience - Provide the CYP with real-life experiences when learning new vocabulary to make abstract concepts more concrete	Makaton - Core Vocabulary - Starting Out Or Signalong - Signalong - The Communication Charity Symbol communication and communication support software - Widgit Software Widgit Symbols Help Communication Colourful semantics  <i>Use of Colourful Semantics . Colourful Semantics are used in primary schools as a universal approach to support spoken and written language. In secondary schools, they may be used as a targeted strategy, rather than a universal strategy, for individuals or for a group of young people with SEND. For more information, please see the Ranges document.</i> Objects of reference - Objects of reference - Sense Now and Next/ First and Then Board Communication for All County AAC - Communication for All County AAC Blank Levels Children's Therapy Services - Speech & Language Therapy Team NHFT Home - Action for Stammering Children Comic Strip Conversations and Social Stories (these should be used to help understand a situation, not to tell someone how to behave)

CYP may have difficulties understanding what is being said to them so they might:

- Misunderstand tasks or rules
- Have difficulty with new information or concepts.
- Show increased anxiety due to feelings of confusion
- Not follow your instructions
- Seem distracted and may watch others
- Use empty words such as “thingy” “stuff” “you know”
- Have limited or unexpected responses
- Be unable to use vocabulary in different situations and contexts

- Check that hearing has been tested
- Adults gain the CYP’s attention before asking a question or giving an instruction. Some CYP will need you to use their name first or have instructions given on a 1:1 level.
- Give plenty of processing time
- Slow down your rate of speech although keep it natural.
- Avoid multiple instructions or large amounts of information in one go. Instead give information in chunks, ask one question at a time and wait for a response, pause between sentences.
- Repeat instructions- make visual such as write on the board
- Pre-teaching of key vocabulary and review at the end of lessons
- Provide easy access to a glossary of terminology being taught
- Use of vocabulary maps to dissect and visually represent the meaning of the word using both semantic information (category, what it does, where you might find it, antonyms and synonyms) as well as phonological information (words that rhyme, initial and final sound), particularly for tier 2 and 3 words.
- Support to use a dictionary/online to find out the meaning of new or unfamiliar words
- Have visual display boards with the vocabulary needed
- Use of first, then, next...
- Access to an oral language modifier for assessments
- Visuals can include schedules, first/then boards, task planners and feelings keyring.
- Simplify language when giving instructions and check for understanding.
- Avoid using complex language / concepts, such as before and after, and instead use clear simple phrases such as ‘First’ and ‘Then’.

Visual Timetable



Visual cues for key question words



[Word maps](#)

Word Aware - [Word Aware – Thinking Talking](#)

Feelings Fan



CYP may have difficulties understanding what is being said to them so they might...continued

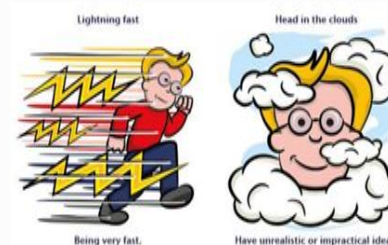
- Have literal understanding
- Be unable to find words
- Struggle to share new ideas or contribute to group discussions
- Appear distracted or disengaged
- Find it hard to generalise information and retain new vocabulary

- Always tell the CYP what to do rather than what not to do. i.e. instead of "stop running" say "walk "
- Be aware that the CYP may not understand more abstract language. E.g. 'it' or 'there'. Rather than saying "Put it over there" say "Put the book on my desk." If necessary, model the instruction.
- Concrete, pictorial, practical resources to support understanding of curriculum content no matter what the age.
- Match complexity of verbal sentences/explanations with CYP's own expressive language.
- Agree on consistent words/phrases to be used across the setting rather than using a range of words for the same activity (e.g. dinner time, lunchtime, break etc.)
- Use of objects of reference/gestures to support understanding of what you are saying.
- Avoid idioms, figurative language and ambiguous phrasing where possible. Use precise, literal wording when possible.
- Provide written summaries of verbal discussions or write down key words/ phrases during verbal discussions
- Explain technical language/ jargon

Object of reference



Understanding idioms



CYP does not understand or use social rules of communication. They might:

- Be quiet and withdrawn
- Struggle to take turns in activities or during conversations
- Struggle with conversational skills
- Find forming and maintaining friendships challenging
- Struggle to join in with group activities
- Struggle to recognise emotions in themselves and in others.
- Be socially vulnerable, for example, sharing personal information or not understanding how to keep themselves safe online

- Staff to be aware of neurodiversity affirming practice principles and trauma informed approaches
- Staff to have an understanding of the nervous system survival vs safety.
- Prioritise connection over compliance
- Be curious and find out the 'why' behind a CYP actions and behaviours
- Use play based, relationship centred methods to support CYP to feel safe and respected
- Validate all experiences and feelings, reflect back what they have said showing active listening and acknowledgement of their feelings.
- Support CYP to find others with similar interests and experiences, help them to build a sense of identity through community
- Accept all styles of communication. Embrace and connect through their passions and interests
- Do not force 'neurotypical' conversation styles or norms e.g. small talk, turn taking. Recognise that non-linear topic progression or conversational tangents can be natural and meaningful to the CYP.
- Support the use of sensory accommodations e.g. use of fidgets, alternate seating, pacing, quiet spaces.
- When talking to a CYP they may find eye contact painful and difficult to do, don't force this as they can still listen without making eye contact. Some conversations are easier when sitting side by side, going on a walk or playing a game as it reduces pressure
- Support CYP to identify their communication preferences.
- Accept all forms of communication and recognise that when a CYP may be dysregulated or overwhelmed their usual method of communication may not be possible
- Teach CYP about the double empathy problem and how misunderstandings aren't just down to them and their communication style

[What is Polyvagal Theory? | Polyvagal Institute](#)

[Working definition of trauma-informed practice - GOV.UK](#)

[Embracing neurodiversity affirmative practice: A path to inclusive support for autistic people](#)

[The double empathy problem](#)

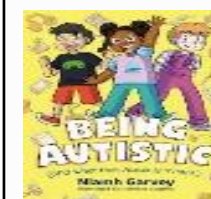
Autism, identity and me (2 books) by Rebecca Duffus

Practical workbook

Professional guide



Being autistic (and what that actually means) by Niamh Garvey (book for young children)



CYP does not understand or use social rules of communication. They might:

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- Struggle to join in with group activities
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- Be socially vulnerable, for example, sharing personal information or not understanding how to keep themselves safe online

- Provide social commentary- think out loud- narrate what you're thinking, comment on what is happening and why, process and problem solve out loud
- Utilise visuals to support communication
- Focus on self-advocacy and problem solving
- Use flexible grouping to provide opportunities for collaborative work
- Use real life resources as prompts to support engagement – such as the use of role play
- Ensure consistency with language used to convey social rules between home and school.
- Use timers (sand timers, digital timers).
- Adults aware that a CYP with social communication differences may not notice or understand the meaning of non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions or tone of voice and may misinterpret situations. You will need to back up “implied meanings” with a verbal instruction or commentary.
- Visual prompt cards can be used in the classroom to support the understanding of instructions and what is expected behaviour in the classroom environment.
- All staff need to use these consistently and should also know about a CYP's reward scheme for responding to the prompt cards. The prompt card can be shown without verbal language or it can be supported with a simple phrase.
- Consistent visuals in the playground to provide examples of social games that can be played.
- Teaching social rules through play. e.g. turn taking or small group sessions
- Teaching of social communication to be embedded throughout all areas of the curriculum e.g. prompt cards to use with a talk partner.
- Playtime buddy / or lead / to support a younger age group e.g. buddy reading / board games.

Neurodiversity affirming practices in early childhood: an empowering guide to diverse development and play by Kerry Murphy

[Pandas](#) (Neurobears- strengths-based online course for Autistic young people to help them understand their identity, with a focus on communication and self-advocacy aged 8-13)

Talk partner visuals



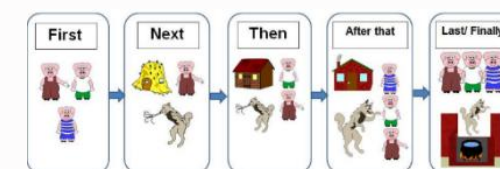
Playground visuals to support being safe



CYP may have difficulties with imagination. They might:

- Struggle to engage in pretend play or role-play activities during drama or playtime.
- Find it hard to generate ideas for creative writing, often sticking to literal or repetitive themes.
- Difficulty visualising outcomes or predicting consequences in problem-solving tasks.

- Use of concrete prompts or visual aids to support imaginative storytelling or art activities
- Use of role play and drama as well as props such as puppets
- Increased exposure to a range of books and topics – whole class and small group story telling opportunities
- Use of photos to talk through what might be happening
- What might happen next discussions e.g. when reading a story together, before turning the page, discuss what might happen next based on the clues so far.

Use of puppets to support story-telling**CYP may have difficulties understanding instructions and routines. They might:**

- Struggle to understand instructions within the classroom
- Struggle to follow classroom routines
- Struggle to transition between activities

- Use the name of the CYP and confirm attention prior to giving an instruction.
- Use chunking to break down instructions
- Repeat, revisit and overlearn instructions
- Give instructions in a logical order with a visual checklist
- Give the CYP processing time before assuming they do not understand
- Create a culture of speaking out if CYP do not understand
- Use a visual schedule to break down tasks to be completed into manageable chunks
- Use of workstations, tray tasks, etc. To break down and structure activities

Dual Coding [Cognitive Load Theory](#) | [Dual Coding: A Teacher's Guide](#) | [What is Dual Coding](#)

[Resources listing](#) | [Nasen](#)

CYP may have difficulties using structure and rule in spoken language. They might:

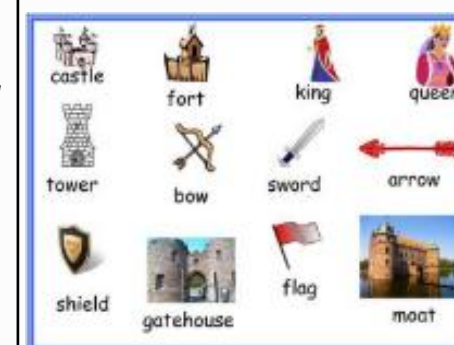
- Not speak in whole complex sentences.
- Use limited words
- Muddle the order of events
- Use words in the wrong order
- Use confusing narrative
- Use pronouns incorrectly
- Be inconsistent with the use of tenses

- Allow time for the CYP to think before responding, *e.g. pause after asking a question to give processing space.*
- Expand on what the CYP says to model fuller language, *e.g. if they say "dog run," respond with "Yes, the dog is running fast."*
- Model back their sentence using the correct grammar, rather than highlighting their error. For example, if they said 'him runned' you could say 'yes he ran.'
- Model correct vocabulary and sentence structure during activities, *e.g. "I am cutting the paper" while doing a craft.*
- Offer choices to support decision-making, *e.g. "Would you like to use the blue pencil or the red pencil?"*
- Provide word mats with sentence starters and key vocabulary, *e.g. a mat with phrases like "I feel..." or "I want to..." during circle time.*
- Use visual story prompts to support narrative development, *e.g. picture cards showing a beginning, middle, and end of a story.*
- Use story boards to plan out narrative
- When reading together, talk about the structure of the story
- Practice retelling simple stories, using picture prompts
- Simple sequencing tasks, model the sequence of everyday tasks *e.g. what are the steps when washing hands,*
- Complete sequencing tasks with pictures/sentences depending on their developmental level for a familiar story you are reading or that they enjoy

[Support children's story-telling skills - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives](#)

[Supporting-Narrative-Skills.pdf](#)

Use of tabletop word mats linked to the curriculum



CYP may have difficulties with limited attention span compared to developmentally appropriate milestones.

They might:

- Struggle to stay focused during whole-class teaching.
- Find it difficult to follow multi-step instructions
- Frequently shift from one activity to another without finishing
- Appear disengaged or daydream during lessons

- Build in regular, short breaks to help maintain focus
- Adapt tasks to suit individual needs, *e.g. offering a drawing response instead of written work.*
- Break tasks into smaller, manageable chunks, *e.g. complete one maths question at a time with check-ins.*
- Use visual timetables and prompts to support attention
- Apply backward chaining to build success, *e.g. support the CYP to complete the final step of tidying up, then gradually add earlier steps.*
- Give clear, named instructions
- Ask the CYP to repeat back the task to confirm understanding
- Use timers to set focused work periods
- Provide individualised timetables to support routine and predictability, *e.g. a personalised schedule with symbols for each part of the day.*
- Attention Autism bucket therapy to help develop attention, listening, shared attention, switching attention & turn taking
- Utilise their interests within teaching materials and adapt activities/tasks so their interests can be incorporated

Task Planner

First	Next	Then	Finally
1	2	3	4

Individualised timetable



For information about Bucket time – please see the Padlet



[Attention Autism Session Stage 1 & 2 Rainbow](#)

CYP may have difficulties regulating emotions (this could be linked to anxiety/sensory needs/difficulties communicating their feelings. They might:

- Have emotional outbursts such as crying, shouting, or anger in response to minor frustrations or changes.
- Avoid tasks or transitions, especially when anxious or unsure about what's coming next.
- Overreact to sensory input, like covering ears during loud noises or refusing to enter busy environments.
- Struggle to express feelings verbally, which may lead to withdrawal, shutdowns, or physical behaviours instead.

- Prepare CYP for transitions using visual tools, e.g. a “now and next” board to reduce anxiety and support understanding.
- Use clearly displayed visual timetables that are consistently used such as - remove or tick off activities as they happen to help CYP track the day and anticipate changes.
- Emotion check ins at key times in the school day and prepared regulation strategies linked to their identified emotion.
- Give verbal warnings before changes and pair with visual cues, e.g. “In 5 minutes we'll tidy up” while showing a countdown timer.
- Use simplified, reduced clear language especially during emotional moments, e.g. “Let's sit down and breathe” instead of complex instructions when a CYP is upset.
- Model and teach emotional vocabulary, e.g. “I can see you're frustrated - let's use our calm space.”
- Provide access to a calm, low-stimulation space to support emotional regulation, e.g. a quiet corner with soft furnishings and visual prompts for calming strategies.
- Use “first and then” boards to support task completion and motivation, e.g. “First writing, then drawing” to help CYP engage with adult-led tasks.
- Encourage CYP to repeat back instructions or plans
- Ensure consistent adult communication across staff, e.g. use shared notes or handovers to maintain consistent language and strategies.
- Celebrate and reinforce positive communication and regulation.
- Co-regulation is the first step before a CYP can be expected to self regulate. When they are experiencing big emotions, provide comfort (let them know you are there), model how they can regulate (e.g. breathing techniques, use of movement) and create a safe space. Remember to give them space and respect their wishes, where safe to do so. They may also need time to regulate before any conversations are had.
- Sensory needs are met through adaptations to the environment and expectations around the CYP

Calm space [How to set up a calming or sensory space in a classroom](#)



Regulation – further research
[Promoting young children's self-regulation skills through play | Anna Freud](#)

Interoception

[Co-regulation - The OT Toolbox](#)

The SEND Code of Practice states that *“Support for learning difficulties may be required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation. Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and associated difficulties with mobility and communication, through to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), where children are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties, as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment. Specific learning difficulties (SpLD) affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.”*

Cognition and Learning needs refer to challenges in developing core skills such as conceptual understanding, literacy and numeracy which can significantly affect a CYP’s ability to engage with the curriculum and make progress. In both primary and secondary settings, it is essential that staff recognise the importance of early identification and respond with appropriate support to reduce barriers to learning and participation. CYP who have cognition and learning needs may experience difficulties in processing information, retaining knowledge and applying skills independently. They may also experience difficulties in other areas of need, including communication and interaction, social and emotional development, and sensory processing. This section outlines strategies that should be ordinarily available in all mainstream classrooms to support inclusive practice.

For Further Information and Advice:-

NASEN

[Home page | Nasen Cognitive load and pupils with SEND | Nasen Cognition and Learning | Whole School SEND](#)

Whole School SEND

WNC Portage Assessment Tool included in the

[Portage and Early Years | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

WNC Portage Developmental Profile:
Developmental Profile

<https://cms.westnorthants.gov.uk/media/25095/download>

WNC Local offer

[Educational support for children and young people with SEND | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

Education Endowment Foundation

[Education Endowment Foundation | EEF](#)

EEF - Literacy

[Education Endowment Foundation - Literacy | EEF](#)

EEF Maths EYFS & KS1

[Improving Mathematics in the Early Years and Key Stage 1 | EEF](#)

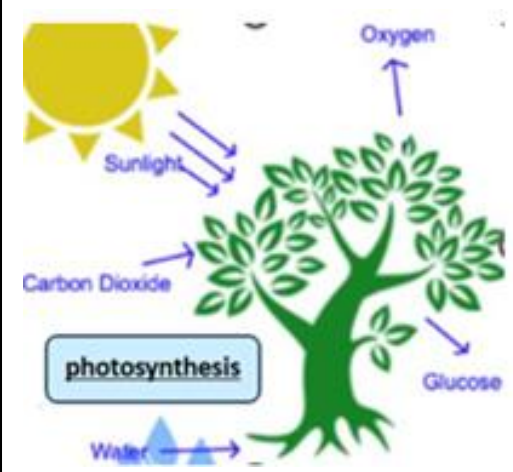
EEF Maths KS2 & 3

[Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 and 3 | EEF](#)

National Health Foundation Trust

[Welcome to iDiscover | NHFT](#)



Areas of Difficulty What you may see : -	Suggested Provision What strategies can help...	Resources
Executive Functioning refers to cognitive skills such as working memory and processing information. Processing Information : - Taking a longer time to process a question or to follow an instruction. Difficulties in thinking of the right words or phrases to express their ideas verbally or in writing. Copying the work of their peers due to cognitive difficulties. Difficulties with selecting resources for learning independently. Difficulty in making choices.	Reasonable adjustments to activities and lessons may include the following adaptations. These include a range of strategies used in both primary and secondary settings. Select the strategies that are appropriate for the young people you support. • Present the information and task in a variety of modes e.g. verbal, written, graphical, pictorial. Identify the CYP's preferred formats for learning. • Adapted resources – where possible, use resources that are matched to the young person's developmental and learning needs, rather than their chronological age. Examples of adaptations include word banks, simplifying vocabulary on worksheets or texts studied and use of visuals and technology, such as an iPad, to support learning. • Breaking down the task into smaller steps. • Clear and simple instructions. Giving one instruction at a time. • Allow the CYP time to process information; they may need additional time to process new information. • When assessing the CYP's understanding, give sufficient time for them to process questions and to form a response ; give them questions in advance. • Use partner talk time to help them to process and gather their thoughts before sharing with the group.	WNC Portage Developmental Profile Portage and Early Years West Northamptonshire Council WNC Portage Developmental Assessment Tool - https://cms.westnorthants.gov.uk/media/25095/download For sources of visuals, use websites such as Widget. Widgit Online An example of dual coding (words with visuals) : 

Difficulties with recognising and applying related facts.

Difficulties with identifying how to improve their work.

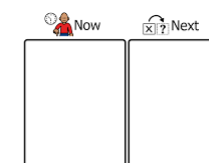
Difficulties with identifying when a task is going well/not going well.

- Use scripted language and consistent phrasing for instructions.
- Use modelling, with verbal explanations, to show how a task is to be done.
- Use of whole class and personalised visual timetables.
- Use thinking maps.
- Social stories
- Share next steps so the young person knows what to expect.
- Use colour coding e.g. separating information into topics or themes.
- Use learning games

Objects of reference progression—aim to make them meaningful to the CYP (object → photo → symbol → word).

Use of photos : e.g. 'destination photos' - take photos of the place and show the CYP where you are going on the school trip.

Now and next / first and then



Use of mini white boards to write down the smaller steps or instructions.

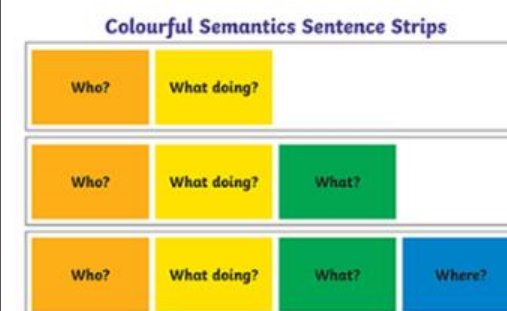
Thinking Maps : [Thinking Maps - A Shared Visual Language For Learning](#)

Social Stories : <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/what-is-a-social-story/>

Visual schedules and timetables
Choice board (e.g. display the visuals of the activities from which they can choose)

- Colourful Semantics are used in primary schools as a universal approach to support spoken and written language. In secondary schools, they may be used as a targeted strategy, rather than a universal strategy, for individuals or for a group of CYP with SEND. For more information, please see the Ranges document.
- Colourful semantics helps with sentence development, understanding questions, developing narrative, understanding written text and developing vocabulary. [Colourful Semantics: A Teacher's Guide | What is Colourful Semantics](#)
- Use picture dictionaries to support understanding of vocabulary.

Use of Colourful Semantics :
[Colourful Semantics: A Teacher's Guide | What is Colourful Semantics](#)



[The Frayer Model: Building Vocabulary Understanding | What is the Frayer Model](#)

Attention and Concentration:-

The CYP appears distracted.

Instructions are partially followed.

Task abandonment or refusal

Tasks may be unfinished.

Difficulties in organising their own equipment/ resources.

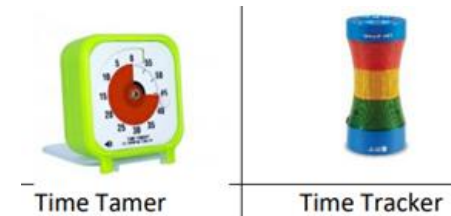
Difficulties with time management

Difficulty sustaining attention in an adult led activity and when working independently.

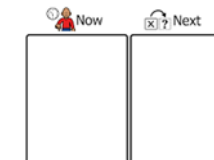
Off task behaviours such as adjusting equipment or moving around the room.

- Use of timers.
- Use of whole class and personalised visual timetables.
- Access to a quiet space and movement breaks.
- Use clear success criteria for tasks
- Focus the CYP's attention on relevant aspects of the task e.g. highlighting key words, colour coding.
- Breaking down the task into smaller steps (chunking).
- Clear expectations set through clear instructions.
- Seating the CYP in the least distracting place in the classroom. Limit the environmental distractions and consider environmental adjustments (e.g. airflow, lighting, noise etc)
- Use of a voice recording to make learning more engaging or to record instructions. These can be used for the CYP to record their ideas for writing and to listen to when needed ; for adults to record whole class instructions and give to individuals who need to hear them several times ; to record messages to be taken to other locations in school or home ; to store ideas for later.

- Use of a visual time prompt such as an electronic timer or sand timer can be helpful to use as an aid to extend concentration.



- Use of sensory aids
- Now and next / first and then



- Wobble cushions and a weighted lap buddy.

Examples of voice recording devices: -



Memory and Retention : -

Difficulties in recalling learning

Difficulty in retaining information

Difficulties with copying information

Difficulty in making links between learnt topics

Written work may not reflect the intentions for writing due to difficulties with recalling content

- Reduce cognitive overload by summarising information : highlighting the key words in the question/ information, using bullet points or a flow chart. Avoid cognitive overload within classroom displays ; content should be relevant and supportive to learning.
- Pre-teaching key vocabulary and concepts to help prepare CYP for the new learning.
- Pre-reading of a text. Build background knowledge, activate prior understanding before reading the text. This may include introducing new vocabulary, background information, questions to consider while reading the text and related pictures or diagrams.
- Use repetition when explaining tasks or giving instructions to reinforce long term memory.
- Ask CYP to repeat back what has been said e.g. when giving instructions.
- Use of learning partners e.g. explain the task to their peer in pair work.
- Limit copying by printing information.
- Avoid complex vocabulary in verbal explanations.
- Consider the amount of information for the CYP to process - avoid overload of working memory (cognitive overload)
- Use visual and word prompts
- Use of modelling with verbal explanations.
- Use Dual Coding : visual images and diagrams alongside written information.
- Opportunities for retrieval practice e.g. quizzes to practise recall of information learnt.
- Teach strategies to support memory e.g. note taking, mind mapping.
- Offer alternative ways of recording information such as drawing, mind-mapping, voice and video recordings.
- Use recall quizzes and memory games to enhance learning.
- Use checklists (e.g. to remember step by step tasks such as solving a math equation)

[Cognitive load and pupils with SEND | Nasen](#)

Offer a visual task timeline as part of a task slicing approach. Example : -

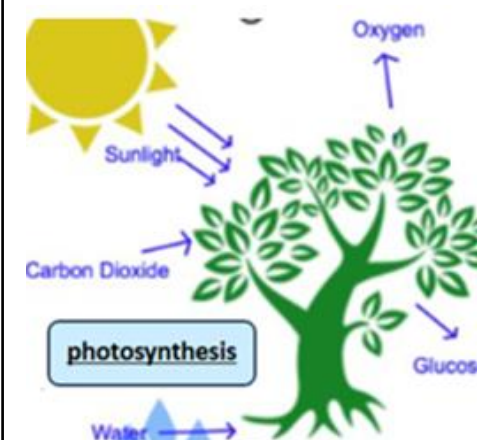


[Voices from the classroom: Supporting working memory in the... | EEF \(video resource\)](#)

[Metacognitive Strategies | Education Endowment Foundation](#)

[EEF blog: Cognitive clutter and better understanding barriers... | EEF](#)

An example of dual coding (words with visuals) :



Literacy : -

May have difficulties with alphabetical order.

Difficulties with making the correct choice for accurate reading and/or spelling at a whole word level.

Confusions/reversals of letter order.

Incorrect spellings

Difficulties with phonological processing (e.g. identifying patterns in sounds)

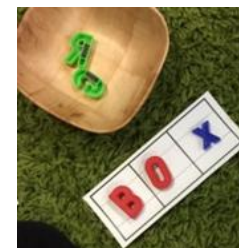
Words are not spelt how they sound.

Limited range/use of supportive spelling strategies

- Revisit early phonological processing skills such as recognising differences in speech sounds (e.g. 'b' vs 'p') and identifying patterns in sounds (like rhymes or alliteration)
- Offer phoneme frames with magnetic letters to allow CYP to test letter/sound order before committing in a written format to paper.
- Have a range of dictionaries available including picture dictionaries, ACE-spelling dictionaries, personalised dictionaries made for/by individual CYP and electronic devices.
- Provide writing frames, sentence starters and word banks to support writing. Include these on classroom display boards.
- Give the CYP a choice of two words to select the correct spelling from.
- ***Use of Colourful Semantics . Colourful Semantics are used in primary schools as a universal approach to support spoken and written language. In secondary schools, they may be used as a targeted strategy, rather than a universal strategy, for individuals or for a group of CYP with SEND. For more information, please see the Ranges document.***

[Education Endowment Foundation : Literacy | EEF](#)

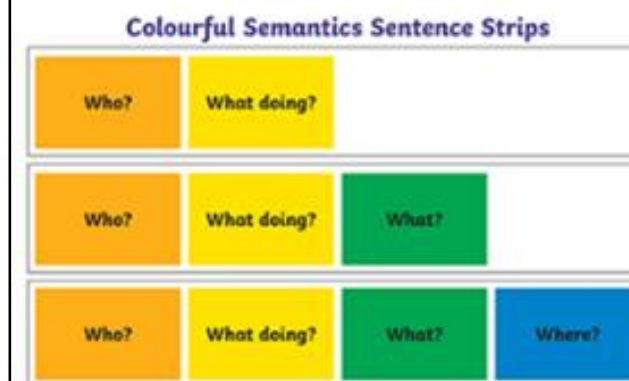
Use of phoneme frames with magnetic letters :



Offer spelling choice cards. Supporting visuals should be included. Example :



[Colourful Semantics: A Teacher's Guide | What is Colourful Semantics](#)



Chooses simpler word choices to avoid spelling particular words.

Masks spelling errors with illegible handwriting

Difficulties with identifying syllables

Reluctance to read/write

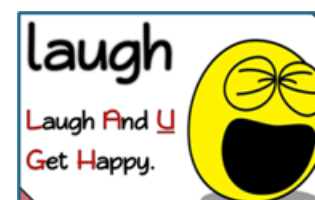
Difficulties with isolating sounds or able to isolate sounds but not blend effectively.

- Offer spelling mats organised alphabetically.
- Providing story boards can support reading comprehension.
- Break down words. Example : The word 'walk' is a verb. Add 'ed' to form the past particle of the verb (walked).
- Ensure the range of reading materials is age appropriate and, if possible, reflective of their interests. Use ebooks and audio books if possible.
- Trial the use of a coloured overlay – explore a range of colours to find the one that has the most impact.
- Implement speed reads. Have the CYP read a familiar text as quickly and as accurately as they can. Record times and aim for a personal best.

Offer opportunities to physically build words by identifying syllables using building blocks/LEGO :



Provide personalised mnemonics that could be collected on a keyring or in a spelling notebook. Example :



Explore word formation. Example:



'Talk Boost' intervention to support reading : [Register for What Works - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives](#)

Offer paired reading opportunities : - [Paired Reading Schemes a teacher toolkit.indd](#)

[The Frayer Model: Building Vocabulary Understanding | What is the Frayer Model](#)

Maths : -

Difficulties with number order

Difficulties with recalling number facts accurately and consistently

Incorrect calculations

Difficulties with conceptual understanding - reliance on rote learning (for example, the CYP may know that $3 + 4 = 7$, but not understand what this means)

Difficulties with mental arithmetic.

- Give examples of real-life experiences when teaching curriculum content e.g. shopping, managing money, understanding timetables, bank accounts, bills, cooking etc.
- Provide clear and simple instructions.
- Give sentence starters to help the CYP explain their answer.
- Move through concrete to pictorial and then abstract (symbolic) representations of numbers/concepts, with modelled examples at each stage. Ask the CYP to check their calculations by using pictorial or concrete strategies.
- Provide worked examples and model tasks step-by-step
- Model making mistakes and how to work through them.
- Encourage the CYP to revisit previously learned knowledge/skills before building upon this.
- Use games that consolidate and develop number skills.
- Focus on strengthening simple number concepts first through repetition and overlearning, e.g. sorting/grouping, recognising more/less.
- Use practical tasks to build sense of number and quantity.
- Encourage the CYP to talk through their thinking/reasoning.

[Improving Mathematics in the Early Years and Key Stage 1 | EEF](#)

[Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 and 3 | EEF](#)

Offer concrete, pictorial and then abstract representations of the same concept:



- Count with a variety of objects in all learning environments e.g. counting balls from one container to another.
- Use number songs and rhymes supported by objects/ props and actions.
- Introduce topics using concrete hands-on materials (e.g. counters, Dienes rods).
- Provide resources such as number squares, number lines, number tracks, bead strings.
- Use standard and non-standard dot patterns for subitising and partitioning.
- Use number lines to develop understanding of magnitude, e.g. identify whether a CYP can accurately represent the number on a number line.
- If the CYP is struggling to distinguish between visually similar symbols (e.g. +/x), colour code them.
- Reduce the need for unnecessary copying using printed materials.
- Use headed columns for place value.
- Provide regular opportunities to practise mental maths skills and number fact knowledge (e.g. using games like pairs, snap)
- Draw attention to the multiple words used for symbols like +/-

Use Numicon (plastic shapes with holes) to link learning of numeral to the quantity it represents:



Subitising cards : -



The SEND Code of Practice states: *“Children 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.”*

As a school practitioner, it is essential to be able to recognise and identify a type of behaviour. To understand what the behaviour might be communicating and to then implement the right provision and support to meet the identified SEMH need.

For all areas of SEMH need, any provision or support should be provided in line with the needs of the CYP and is not dependent on diagnosis.

National and international research consistently identifies as least 90% of CYP in groups likely to present with SEMH needs will have unidentified language and communication differences affecting social behaviours and life chances.

Behaviour is often communication of unmet needs; always ask could this be a language need that school can support? Are CYP accessing the support they need in the classroom and are barriers being removed.

Please refer to the strategies within the communication and interaction section and the Barriers to Learning section of this resource when considering SEMH provision.



For further information and advice:

WNC Local offer

Action for Children

MindEd: a free online training tool, provides information and advice for staff on CYP's mental health and can help to sign post staff to targeted resources when mental health problems have been identified

The PHSE Association

Therapeutic Thinking

Solihull Approach

WNC EP service

WNC Virtual School

WNC Inclusion and Intervention Support Team (IIST)

[SEND Local Offer directory | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

[Mental health and wellbeing support | Action For Children MindEd Hub](#)

[PSHE Association | Charity and membership body for PSHE education](#)

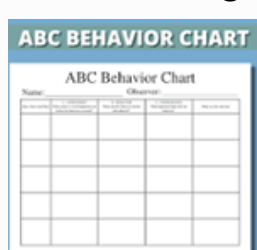
[Therapeutic Thinking](#)

[Home - Togetherness](#)

[Educational Psychology Service \(EPS\) - WNC | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

[Virtual School | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

[School Age Specialist Support | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

Areas of Difficulty What you may see : -	Suggested Provision What strategies can help...	Resources
Behaviour is a form of communication. It is important to understand that communication, in order to be able to put in place effective interventions which result in long term change. All of the descriptions provided represent how behaviours or presentation can be perceived by others. It is important to see these behaviours within the context of survival instincts, anxiety and underpinned by possible language and or learning needs	• Provide a secure base (safe and predictable environment). • Implement whole-setting programmes such as nurturing schools, mentally healthy schools or Therapeutic Thinking • Consider the reason/purpose of behaviour – what is the context/history? Use the Therapeutic Tree and tracking systems provided by the scheme • Uses resources available to promote the well-being of CYP in their setting e.g., resources from Anna Freud • Routines and changes are communicated in advance. • Careful consideration of seating position. • Where possible, make tasks relevant and interesting, linked to the CYP's strengths and development needs.	Therapeutic Thinking  What schools and further education settings can do : Mentally Healthy Schools  Visual timetables 
Flight responses: • Verbal and physical aggression. • Violence towards property and/or people. • Inappropriate language. • Blaming others. • Pushing friends away.	• Think carefully about lesson content in relation to CYP's known previous life experiences ensure opportunity for discussion if topic reflects pupils own adverse childhood experiences. • Use of strategies and approaches to develop understanding of presenting behaviours, e.g., ABC charts and the Iceberg approach.	ABC recording charts 

- Inflexibility and/or unable to follow rules or instructions.
- Disrespectful.
- Self-harming/self-sabotaging behaviours.
- Refusal to follow instructions or comply with behavioural norms.
- Stealing.
- May appear to be being dishonest.
- Moving to another area without notice or permission (absconding).
- Hiding.
- Inability to manage unstructured/free time.
- Avoiding tasks and activities.
- Hyperactive.
- Hypervigilant.
- Agitated.
- Fidgety.

- Use of diagnostic profile for assessment such as Boxall profile.
 - Use of SDQ for obtaining views of self by the CYP and parents as well as staff
- Consider movement breaks.
- Support co-regulation.
- Consider learning breaks.
- Adopt a Key Person approach.
- Provide support and/or organised activities during unstructured times.
- Exit cards.
- Develop risk assessments with parents and the CYP.
- Ensure consistent rules, boundaries and schedules whilst remaining willing to offer some flexibility.
- Offer a safe place within the classroom and offer to co-regulate when necessary.
- Use of restorative conversations
- Offer a 'safe' and familiar task when emotions are heightened.
 - Develop strategies/ scripts/ actions to support self-regulation

[ALSUP - ASSESSMENT OF LAGGING SKILLS & UNSOLVED PROBLEMS](#)

[SEMH Assessment & Emotional Behavioural Toolkit for Children - Interventions, Assessments & Strategies](#)



[Home : Mentally Healthy Schools](#)



[Guide to social stories](#)

- Immature behaviours, tone of voice.
- Withdrawal from social engagements.
- Passive with neutral expression.
- Compliant – which can lead to vulnerability.
- Providing only 'yes' and 'no' answers.
- Self-harm.
- Unable to accept praise.

- Support verbal input with visuals (demonstration, images, objects, key words).
- Assessment through teaching, e.g., are there parts of the curriculum that they find easier to manage than others? Use these to develop confidence.
- Small group work, e.g., friendship or social skills, nurture groups.
- Play-based activities.
- Establish interests.
- Buddying/Peer Mentoring.
- Giving responsibility for looking after someone else.
- Unpicking the behaviours – negative and positive behaviours – what lies behind them?

- Unable to show enjoyment of seemingly positive experiences.

Freeze behaviours:

- Unable to absorb information and act upon it - forgetful.
- Distracted, difficulties with concentration and engagement.
- Not listening or interacting.
- Appears confused.

- Seek advice around self-harming or risk-taking behaviours – a multi-professional approach.
- Provide substitutes for self-harming behaviours, e.g., elastic bands.
- Identifying what is not right through engagement with the CYP.
- Looking back, when did the behaviour start to change?
- Liaison and collaboration with home is essential to understand the wider picture.
- Clear reward system which is acceptable to the CYP to support positive behaviours and progress

Physical symptoms that are medically unexplained, e.g., soiling, stomach pains	• Provide activities that are stress reducing, e.g., games, dance, colouring, gardening, animals, forest school. • Keep a log and analyse pattern or trends to identify trigger. • Liaison with Health and parents to identify the cause.	
Attention difficulties including ADHD and ADD and any neurodevelopmental disorder. • Inattentiveness: • Hypervigilant • Having a short attention span and being easily distracted. • Appearing forgetful or losing things. • Being unable to stick to tasks that CYP perceive as tedious or time-consuming, but concentrates well on tasks which they enjoy and are interested in.	• Understanding the reasons - is there a pattern? • Allowing plenty of time for movement or frequent small concentration periods. • Have a clear structure to the day. • Provide clocks and timers on desk. • Have clear expectations regarding behaviours and a clear and consistent response to behaviours. • Being aware of times of the day that may be more difficult. • Make reasonable adjustments that need to be made in line with Equalities Legislation. • Use known interests or hobbies to engage in activities and discussion. • Provide regular opportunities for exercise and brain breaks.	Visual timetable  Timers  Pomodoro clocks or sand timers 

- Appearing to be unable to listen to or carry out instructions.
 - Mind too busy to hear and process complex instructions
 - Constantly changing activity or task.
 - Having difficulty organising tasks.
 - Relies on visual processing
- Hyperactivity and impulsiveness
- Being unable to sit still, often fidgeting.
 - Struggling to concentrate on tasks.
 - Poor working memory.
 - Excessive physical movement.
 - Excessive talking.
 - Being unable to wait their turn.
 - Appearing to act without thinking.
 - Interrupting conversations.
 - Appearing to have little or no sense of danger.

Attachment Difficulties (including Attachment Disorder)

- Appears anxious.
- Appears withdrawn.

- Nurture group/nurture ethos.
- Liaise with parents and carers for shared understanding.
- Robust and careful transition when the CYP starts school, which includes consideration of life history.

- Task planner

First	Next	Then	Finally
1	2	3	4

[Social Emotional and Mental Health \(SEMH\) and wellbeing support for education settings | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

[Virtual School - Training | West Northamptonshire Council](#)

- May experience intense and overwhelming emotions exhibited as anger or 'loss of control'.
- May appear to lack inhibitions e.g., hugging people they don't know or appearing to be 'over friendly' towards children and adults.
- Finding it difficult to join in with play or interactive games.
- Appearing to 'sabotage' situations where things are going well.
- May avoid eye contact.
- Struggles with impulse control.
- Struggle with cause and effect thinking.
- Lacks self-belief and confidence (has low self-esteem).
- Seek to make relationships but have difficulty sustaining them due to their own emotional needs and difficulties understanding the needs of others.
- Can be unpredictable and responses to situations may be inconsistent.
- Need to feel in control of their world as a survival mechanism.
- Have difficulties managing emotions as they may not have had appropriate modelling of regulation in younger years.
- Feel insecure and may not feel confident to follow guidance of others.
- Looks to belong socially but may make wrong friendship choices as they seek acceptance.

- All staff trained and aware of any CYP with attachment difficulties and how to respond to them (at a single child level).
- Consideration of reasonable adjustments to and changes that could be made to the discipline procedures/behaviour policies.
- Consideration of family context and the range of CYP that may have attachment difficulties, e.g., adopted, forces children, looked after children.
- Liaison with external professionals.

Virtual School - Training | West Northamptonshire Council

App forthcoming for schools – children with additional needs and those supported by social care.



Low level disruption or behaviours that appear to want to draw attention, e.g., talking out of turn, frequent interruptions to learning, fiddling with objects.	• Differentiated use of voice, gesture and body language. • Focus on reducing anxiety and thereby behaviours. • Flexible and creative use of rewards and consequences e.g., 'catch them being good'. • Positive reinforcement of expectations through verbal scripts and visual prompts. • Time out/quiet area in the setting.	• Calm space <u>How to set up a calming or sensory space in a classroom</u>
Difficulty in making and maintaining healthy relationships.	• Small group/nurture group activities to support Personal Social and Emotional development. A range of differentiated opportunities for social and emotional development, e.g., buddy systems, friendship strategies, circle time. • Uses resources available to promote the well-being of pupils in their setting e.g., resources from Anna Freud	<u>SEMH Assessment & Emotional Behavioural Toolkit for Children - Interventions, Assessments & Strategies</u>  Boxall Profile® Online <u>Restorative Conversations with students</u>



Hearing

Many children and young people (CYP) with a hearing loss/deafness will have their needs identified early. Some younger children may have needs that go unrecognised until they reach a group setting or are expected to undertake tasks that require them to use hearing skills in a different context. CYP may have a temporary hearing loss that fluctuates or acquire a hearing loss later. This could be caused through illness or accident or might be because they have a progressive condition or a condition that has a late onset. The most common cause of temporary and fluctuating hearing loss in childhood is commonly known as glue ear. If a CYP appears to have a hearing difficulty that has not been identified previously, parents should be advised to take them to the GP and request a referral for a hearing test at the local pediatric audiology clinic.

Vision

Vision needs range from mild through to severe. Many CYP have their vision corrected by spectacles/contact lenses. If a CYP has an eye condition that cannot be corrected by spectacles/contact lenses they are considered to have a vision impairment. Many CYP with vision needs will have their needs identified early and will be supported by specialist teams. Some CYP may have needs that go unrecognised until they are expected to undertake tasks that require them to use vision skills in a different context. Some acquire a vision loss through illness or accident. A vision condition can impact on other areas, for example a CYP's social and emotional development. If a CYP appears to have a vision need that has not been identified previously, parents/carers should be advised to take them to an optician or the GP.

Multi-sensory (Hearing/ Vision)

A CYP with multi-sensory needs has a permanent hearing loss together with a specialist vision need. This may have been present from birth or acquired in later life. Some people also call this condition dual sensory loss or deaf blindness. The effects of a combined loss can have a great impact as the CYP is not able to use their other distance sense to compensate. The key areas in which a CYP with multi-sensory needs may need support in are communication and language, mobility and accessing information. The numbers of CYP with these needs are very small and the needs of each CYP differ greatly. CYP who have multi-sensory needs are usually known to specialist teams.



Physical Needs

If a CYP has a physical need it can mean that they have a limitation on physical functions, mobility and/or stamina, which can have a negative effect on their ability to do daily activities. CYP may be born with these physical needs, or they may happen through injury or illness. In the school environment, physical needs cover a wide range of challenges related to a CYPs physical well-being and how it impacts learning and participation. These needs can include gross motor coordination, fine motor skills and self-organisation, meaning that adjustments may need to be made to increase accessibility and safety.

Medical Needs

If a CYP has a medical need they may have lived with this since birth, or it may be a result of illness or injury. There are a whole range of different medical needs a CYP may need managing for example, asthma or diabetes to responding to acute emergencies such as anaphylaxis or seizures. Therefore, it is important that support is provided for those CYP who require medication, management of medical devices or specific interventions. Some CYP with medical needs may have an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) which is a document that outlines specific medical needs, including how to manage daily care, medication administration and emergency procedures. This IHP is coproduced with CYP, parents, school and relevant healthcare professionals.

Areas of Difficulty What you may see : -	Suggested Provision What strategies can help...	Resources
Hearing	• Ensure the CYP is seated where they can best see and hear you, especially your face. Avoid moving when speaking and turning away as these obscure lip patterns. • Ensure good lighting • Relay the comments of other pupils if they are further away. • Encourage other pupils to speak one at a time and indicate when they wish to speak. • Position the CYP away from sources of noise. • Avoid teaching in front of a window, as this creates shadow on the face and may impact lip-reading. • Minimise background noise where possible, for example: close doors, control working noise levels of pupils, and check chairs are not scraping etc. • Avoid teaching in areas with poor acoustics, using soft furnishings can help with this • If the CYP uses technology, ensure that it is being used and is working. • Check you have the CYP's attention before you start speaking, by using their name. • Manage the pace of the learning, allowing the CYP more time to process information. • Repeat or reword information if needed. • Reinforce spoken language with visual cues and clues. • Check the CYP understanding of instruction and new vocabulary by asking a series of open-ended questions • Consider the impact on listening fatigue and ensure there is opportunity for breaks. • Encourage the CYP to indicate if they have not heard something (e.g., a traffic light card system may help a CYP if they are reluctant to speak out).	Early Years NDCS - Deaf friendly early education and childcare  National Deaf Children's Society Deaf-friendly teaching: For primary school staff – NDCS Bookshop Deaf-friendly teaching: For secondary school staff – NDCS Bookshop Deaf-friendly teaching: For staff in special schools – NDCS Bookshop What support can I get in exams? National Deaf Children's Society Reasons for tiredness in deaf children Reasons for fatigue

Hearing

- Use peers who have good language and communication skills to model and help develop interactions.
- Consider the use of a quiet area for group work to support the CYP listening
- Use subtitles or give written transcripts when showing media clips or films.
- Exam access arrangements may need to be considered and implemented and embedded into a normal way of working.
- Ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place e.g. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)
- Provide support with self-identity to help the CYP understand and manage their hearing needs and develop a positive self-image.
- Support the development of social skills, making and maintaining relationships.
- Repeat contributions from other pupils because their voices may be quiet or their speech unclear.
- Read aloud as you write on the board.

Books with deaf characters:

[Books with deaf characters | Reviews](#)

Areas of Difficulty What you may see : -	Suggested Provision What strategies can help...	Resources
Vision	• Use an environmental checklist to consider adaptations such as highlighting steps. • Ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place. • Encourage the CYP to wear their spectacles if prescribed – if possible, keep a spare pair handy. • Position the CYP where they can best see the adult in whole class and group activities. • Ensure good lighting and be aware of the impact of shadows, glare and reflected light. Think about using blinds/curtains and stand-alone lights. • Use a clean whiteboard, a contrasting pen and well-spaced, clear writing • Read out loud any information written on a board. • Adopt multi-sensory teaching approaches. • Support access to specialist equipment and technology, including PE equipment that is accessible • Consider support needed for personal care – eating and drinking, dressing. Seek advice and support for mobility, orientation and independence skills from the Habilitation Specialist. • Allow additional time to complete tasks or modify the task, e.g. fewer questions. • Always introduce yourself when working with a CYP with vision impairment. • Always address a CYP with vision impairment by name and use names of other CYP around them rather than using “you”. • CYP may benefit from a safe/sensory/ quiet space • Give clear verbal instructions, descriptions and explanations to accompany each learning activity. • Ensure books are accessible (tactile, large print, electronic). • Use real objects and context to support understanding.	R N I B See differently CustomEyes Books Guide Dogs Home - RNIB Bookshare Get Set Royal National Institute of Blind People Northamptonshire Association For The Blind NAB VICTA Children and young adults who are blind or partially sighted Thomas Pocklington Trust Blind in Business Getting blind and partially sighted people into work

Vision

- Be aware of the CYP's eye condition and the impact it has on learning, personal development and daily tasks.
- Prepare in advance any adapted lesson resources needed.
- Make use of accessibility options on computers.
- Have access arrangements in place for assessments and embed these into the usual way of working if required. Ensure exam access arrangements are on track and up to date.
- Plan all off-site activities carefully. Alert site staff in advance that a CYP with vision impairment will be visiting.
- Provide individual intervention to help the CYP understand and manage their vision impairment and develop a positive self-image.
- Support the development of social skills, making and maintaining relationships.
- Give as many first hand 'real' multisensory experiences as possible.
- Try out different paper/whiteboard colours to find the best contrast.
- Avoid shiny surfaces which reflect light and cause dazzle.
- Read aloud as you write on the board.
- When transitioning between activities/ lessons, warn the CYP beforehand so that they can organise themselves
- Ensure that general classroom routines and strategies are in place so that other children know to tuck chairs in, not leave things on the floor etc.
- Ensure the CYP is talked/ walked through any changes to the classroom layout, as soon as any change has happened.
- The CYP with vision needs may be best placed at the back of a line
- To support the CYP with independence and self-organisation, make sure that they have the top end tray or locker to put their belongings away.
- Support understanding of the lesson by providing verbal commentary e.g. 'we are moving onto the next slide'.
- Ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place e.g. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)

[Positive Looking to go app for iOS and Android \(positiveeye.co.uk\)](https://positiveeye.co.uk)

[2023-03 Examination access guide vP2 \(10\).pdf](#)

[NatSIP - 01. Ensuring equal access to public examinations for candidates with sensory impairment - February 2023](#)

Areas of Difficulty What you may see : -	Suggested Provision What strategies can help...	Resources
Multi Sensory	Implications of Multi-Sensory needs may be a range of the above, and recommendations from both sections above may need to be taken into account when planning learning. • Ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place e.g. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) • CYP may benefit from a safe/sensory/ quiet space	Support for schools, colleges and universities Deafblind UK Information and advice - Sense  Tips for MSI-friendly Classrooms.pdf NATSIP Examination Access Support

Areas of Difficulty	Suggested Provision	Resources
What you may see : -	What strategies can help...	
Physical Needs	- CYP's views are sought and are used to inform planning for physical adaptations that they may require. - Accessibility of the building e.g. ramps, wider doors, lifts/stairs - Ensure there is space to move around with a walker/wheelchair - Ensure the environment is clutter free - Swap rooms so that stairs are not a barrier - Check that any signage is accessible / look at heights of coat hooks, lockers etc - Ensure that the educational setting has an Accessibility Plan - Consider fatigue levels and how these impact on the ability to engage - Allow opportunities to rest throughout the day – E.g. set up a quiet rest area for CYP. This may include having a beanbag, cuddly toys, quiet books, materials to feel, blankets - Consider timing of any physical activity to ensure that CYP is able to take part - Enable access to IT equipment e.g. computers, tablets - Place 'grab' handles near steps and/or toilets - Use Dycem matting to stop bowls/plates/toys moving on surfaces - Offer the opportunity to sit on a chair rather than on the floor. E.g. at carpet times - Use a range of different sized toys and equipment (crayons/pencils) and different types of scissors (loop handles, spring, assisted) - Secure paper to the table to stop it from slipping or put paper on the floor.	Sensory Direct Weighted Blankets, Sensory Toys & Equipment NRS Healthcare - Services Products Scissor Assessment Kit Motor Skills Coordination TTS What are reasonable adjustments and how do they help disabled pupils at school? – The Education Hub Referral Management Centre NHFT

Physical continued

- Extra-curricular activities and educational visits are planned to fully include CYP with SEND (in line with the Equalities Act 2010), including those with SEMH and physical disabilities. “Reasonable adjustments” are made.
- Moving and manual handling training – Staff to have appropriate training to meet physical needs
- Equipment e.g. walkers, standing frame or chair must be accessible and checked by health professionals periodically
- Consider an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP)- see Medical section below
- Consideration to be given for any intimate care needs
- Ensure appropriate risk assessments and action plans are in place e.g. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)
- Support services available through NHS eg. Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, can be accessed via the Referral Management Centre.

[Referral Management Centre | NHFT](#)

Areas of Difficulty	Suggested Provision	Resources
What you may see : -	What strategies can help...	
Medical Needs	- CYP's views are sought and are used to inform planning for medical adaptations that they may require. - Consider fatigue levels and how these impact on the ability to engage - Ensure plans are in place if rest or sleep is needed. - Robust procedures in place for the administration of medicines - Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) – should be drawn up in partnership between the school, parents, and relevant healthcare professionals. CYP should also be involved wherever possible. IHPs help schools effectively support CYP with medical conditions and provide clarity about what need to be done, when and by whom. - Clear contacts for medical emergency should be included in IHP - First aid room/area - Staff medical training e.g., EpiPen training, nasogastric (NG) Tube training - Support equipment such as lockable medicine cabinets, first aid bags, fridges - Regular home and setting contact when/if CYP is not able to attend, to maintain 'sense of belonging' with peers and the community - Quiet area for treatments to be carried out - Consideration to be given for any intimate care needs - Ensure all staff are aware of medical needs (including cover staff) - Ensure appropriate risk assessments and action plans are in place e.g. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) - Bereavement training and policies - NHFT provide a nurse training offer to support families/carers and professionals in meeting the medical needs of CYP in educational settings, a referral to this team can be completed via the Referral Management Centre.	Rare conditions Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK Referral Management Centre NHFT

Part 3

Inclusion in Action



From Policy to Practice

This final section provides the practical tools needed to bring the Inclusive Provision Toolkit to life in everyday classroom practice. Drawing on real world case studies from across West Northamptonshire, it shows how inclusive strategies work in practice and the positive difference they make to the outcomes of children and young people (CYP). To support professional dialogue and promote consistency across the county, a shared SEND glossary is included to help staff, parents and partners develop a common language and understanding.

Beyond this document, our commitment is to a responsive and evolving system of support. The live Padlet resource offers a growing library of guidance, videos, templates and practical examples that reflect best practice in inclusive education. Practitioners are encouraged to use this section as a reflective tool: exploring the case studies to challenge thinking, using the glossary to strengthen understanding, and accessing the Padlet to download practical materials. Together, these resources support schools to translate our collective vision for West Northamptonshire into meaningful, inclusive practice for every CYP.

Monitoring Practice

Schools should monitor practice and adapt to the needs of the CYP that attend. There are several tools that can help with this. We have developed a self-assessment tool to support this framework.

Self-evaluation and peer moderation support schools in evidencing practice and informing actions for development / improvement. This provides excellent evidence for governors/ trustees and for Ofsted.

The self-assessment tool is not compulsory, and schools may have other tools that they already use successfully. It aims to support school leaders and governors / trustees in carrying out their SEND responsibilities. This will enable them to make appropriate inclusive provision and carry out their duties under the Equality Act 2010. It can also help schools to compile their SEND Information Report and Accessibility Plans.

Schools are encouraged to consider each element and then RAG rate whether the current provision is:

Yes, in place and consistently applied
Not consistently applied
Not in place

Schools may find it helpful to review practice using the whole document or may want to select areas / sections as applicable.

We have also developed a template action plan that aligns with these headings which can be used if it is helpful. Schools may have their own templates that they would prefer to use.

Please visit the SENCo Zone Padlet
to access the self-assessment tool
and action plan



Journalling Towards Targets

Summary

This school are using dedicated books to journal towards outcomes, to help translate Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) into reality, and better evidence progress, particularly towards targets around communication, social interaction, emotional literacy and regulation.

Whilst this school use this journalling method for CYP with EHCPs (working towards EHCP outcomes), this is a tool that could be useful for any CYP, where the school want to both provide clear focus and build evidence towards targets, particularly around social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.

School Profile

Phase	Early Years and Primary
Academy/Maintained	Maintained
Locality	Suburban
Size	222
EHCP (number)	8
SEND register (%)	16% (36 children)

Why did this work take place?

This work took place to support evidencing towards EHCP outcomes, to make the plans accessible and help translate them into reality. Some outcomes, particularly those focused on communication, social interaction, emotional literacy and regulation do not lend themselves to quantifiable measures of progress (i.e. not tested and scored).

Key objectives

The aim was to make plans more accessible to staff, translating them into practice, and to enable the tracking of progress towards all outcomes, in a way that was manageable for staff.

Actions

‘Purple books’ are set up for each CYP with an EHCP, sectioned by targets, with a summary of targets at the front of each book.

The key roles are the SENCO, TA, pastoral lead, and teachers. The SENCO sets up the book and meets with the TA to ensure clear understanding of the targets, and the expectation/responsibility to evidence activities and progress, in both observing and recording, and creating opportunities to work towards outcomes (e.g. organising group play games to facilitate shared play to work towards social interaction outcomes). Key contributors include teaching assistants and pastoral staff. Teachers also may contribute, by evidencing for example what level the CYP is working at in literacy, including data. The SENCO meets with the teaching assistant to review the purple books, ideally termly.

Evidence where progress is made towards a target, or an observation relating to the target is recorded within the purple book, whether this be a sticky note or written comment, copies of work, pictures, reflections. For example, in one book we reviewed, the CYP had coloured pictures of emotions and indicated which they identified with and reflected below why they felt that way. Other input included sticky notes of where the TA had noted the CYP expressing their feelings and reasons, and copies of work that demonstrated where the CYP was at, in regard to their outcomes. It was emphasised that this is a working book and should be a record of evidence collected throughout the day, not as an additional responsibility completed outside of core working hours.

Parents are also able to review the purple books, and they are shared in annual reviews to demonstrate progress and where a CYP is at regarding their outcomes.

Evaluation & Impact

Purple books have been used by this school for approximately four years. These books enable a clear collection of evidence towards the outcomes, both in what has worked and where progress is still to be made.

The purple books were reported as giving confidence to staff and offering a chance for reflection. Evidence towards outcomes occurs anytime throughout the day, and these purple books support understanding of targets, responsibilities, and reasons for interventions or focused support.

A teaching assistant we spoke to reported that the purple books supported to gather evidence and track progress across different environments and was particularly useful for social interaction targets. Having this book enabled collection of evidence as appropriate – the early years lend themselves more to pictures, whereas books from older years included CYP's reflections on feelings.

These books thus achieve their aims of making plans more accessible to staff, translating them into practice, and providing a manageable method of tracking progress towards all outcomes.

Learnings and sustainability

Should a school want to implement a similar approach, ensuring understanding of the role of the purple book was highlighted as important. This includes meeting with staff to check understanding of the targets and role of the purple book, with more frequent meetings with newer staff to ensure consistency in use of the books.

This work requires the financial commitment of exercise books.

Key ingredients

Clear understanding of person completing the purple book – early check-ins of process

Clear timetable of review

Keeping track of collated evidence

Learnings and future aspirations

In reflection with the SENCO and teaching assistant, learnings included having the books plain as exercise books, with no picture of the CYP on the front, as older years can feel self-conscious of having attention drawn to their purple book in classes. Other learnings included giving the teaching assistant with key responsibility for the book choice over blank or lined pages, for individual ease of completion.

While child voice is evidenced through observations and collated work, staff reflected on opportunities to directly capture the voice of CYP about their progress and targets, by meeting with CYP and going through the targets, so they are aware what they are working towards, and offering opportunities to reflect throughout the year, on where they feel they have made progress and co-planning how they would like to work towards the targets.

Similarly, these books create an opportunity to work with parents, meeting to understand what the parents are looking for around the outcomes, and incorporating purple book reviews into parents' evenings, building parent partnership and dialogue between school and home.

The Outdoor Learning Environment

Summary

This school utilised their outdoor learning environment to better meet SEMH needs, providing a flexible learning environment.

School Profile

Phase	Primary R + 1, 2 + 3, 4 + 5, 5 + 6
Academy/Maintained	Maintained - Federation
Locality	Village School
Size	87
EHCP (number)	2
SEND register (%)	15%

Why did this work take place?

The use of the outdoor environment to meet SEMH needs was initially developed to meet the needs of an individual CYP, who found it difficult to be in the classroom full-time but loved being outdoors, and this has since evolved into the outdoor learning provision.

Key objectives

The aims of this provision were to improve emotional regulation, and meet social, emotional and mental health needs.

Actions

The outdoor learning environment was initially developed to meet the needs of an individual CYP, who had joined at risk of permanent exclusion. Whilst finding it difficult to be in the classroom full-time, child A loved being outdoors, and this evolved into a flexible timetable, working with the site supervisor, helping with jobs such as painting, planting bulbs, and maintaining the outdoor area. Following a grant to develop the forest school, this area became afternoon provision.

Child A's parent shared that he could learn the main bulk of the lesson with the class teacher, and then go out with his 1-1, individually and alongside other CYP, for example completing the work outdoors with a clip-board, "doing it in his own way", meaning that he "relaxed and was able to achieve". This "boosted his confidence with his own ability" as well as "promoting the social aspect".

For child A, provision included accessing sensory circuits, the outdoor provision, working with his 1-1, helping the handyman, attending forest school, helping the younger children at forest school and maintaining the forest school area. He would do planting, weeding, raking leaves. The provision "really helped regulate him, especially in the last 18 months of being at school".

The forest school, a gated area within school grounds, contains a log circle, various trees, and a small pond area. There is also an allotment area within school grounds. CYP look for insects, identify birds, take part in physical activities such as whittling sticks, and drink hot chocolate around the campfire.

CYP at the school shared that "they teach us to look after wildlife", finding "fish, insects, ants, frogs", as well as taking part in the RSPB Big Birdwatch, making a bird feeder of different foods as a restaurant for the birds. They are taught "survival skills" like how to "make a den". Around the campfire, they drink hot chocolate that "tastes so good" and one CYP shared their favourite aspect of the outdoor learning provision is that "you can sit on the logs and think in your imagination [...] my head just explodes with ideas everywhere".

Evaluation & Impact

Child A, who joined at risk of permanent exclusion, had no suspensions or exclusions during their time at the school. Staff reported their engagement levels in learning increased significantly and their social interactions progressed from them only working in isolation to them working alongside peers through meaningful interactions and activities. Child A's parent reported the provision "really helped them in all areas", and that "without that provision and without that support, they wouldn't have got where they are today".

Both staff and the parent we spoke to highlighted the positive effect on emotional regulation. Staff describe the outdoor provision as empowering, building self-confidence and worth, and developing practical life skills. This was echoed by the parent we spoke to, that it boosted their confidence with their own ability, and enabled them to relax and achieve. Pupil voice carried out with all SEN CYP showed that all CYP really benefit and enjoy accessing the outdoor learning provision available to them and access to the nurture room and study room. Many identify this as their safest space in the school.

Learnings and sustainability

Challenges

One challenge overcome in this work is the understanding of the role of the provision – that it is not to be used as a reward, but to be available as needed for pupils. This has been supported by the available training for all staff (this CPD is already available, not additional), including adaptive teaching, zones of regulation and adverse childhood experiences. Support from senior leaders to utilise the provision has also promoted use of the provision as intended – staff feel supported for CYP to use the space as needed.

Key ingredients: Relationships and Adaptability

Relationships: Relationships were identified as the key ingredient of this work. This requires buy-in from leadership, and all staff - a key figure in this case study has been the site supervisor. This work also requires buy-in from parents, regarding the value of practical learning, developing the whole child and recognising and building on the strengths of the CYP.

A key ingredient identified by a parent we spoke to seconded this, that the whole staff, from the receptionist, breakfast club staff, site supervisor, teachers and leadership, they all got him, made time for him, investing the time to completely understand him, with the SENCO supporting this understanding.

Adaptability: The provision has to work for different cohorts of CYP to have longevity. It is not fixed and must be adaptable so it can change to meet your population.

Finances

The initial forest school set up was covered by a grant, and the continuing cost is the upkeep such as pruning. The Friends of the School are funding for new resources.

Longevity

With adaptability for different cohorts a key focus of the school, this provision is malleable to meet the needs of different CYP. In the future, this school plans to run a specific group over the summer term with a focus on SEMH.

This forest school is also utilised by other schools within the federation, who attend in blocks, accessing a provision run by external facilitators.

Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Intervention

Summary

The school created their 'Retreat' facility in Autumn 2020, to transform the support services available to students. They created bespoke intervention programmes that catered to the specific and unique areas of need within the local community, so that the students received the right support at the right time. Over time this has embedded into a robust culture across the school where social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) is key an integral pillar in the personal development curriculum.

School Profile

Phase	All Through This case study is from the Secondary Phase
Academy/Maintained	Academy
Locality	Town
Size	725 (Secondary phase)
EHCP (number)	24 (Secondary phase)
SEND register (%)	18% (Secondary phase)

Why did this work take place?

Why did this work take place? This facility was initially developed to transform the support services available to students. This has evolved due to the increasing numbers of students experiencing SEMH issues over time.

Key objectives

The aims of this provision were to improve emotional regulation, and meet social, emotional and mental health needs.

Actions

Colleagues undertook rigorous entry and exit data collection to ensure progress was accurately measured using the school specific Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). Clear and concise referral systems were integrated so that students were efficiently triaged to the right support. Effective signposting was undertaken to further support where needed. Progress tracking was stringent. Each student accessing support received a comprehensive sessional progress comment and RAG rating to ensure outcomes for the sessions were met. Upon completion of each intervention a final report was completed which identified if students needed to access further work and support. The views of the child were also captured upon completion of any interventions so that school colleagues could review their standards and practices regularly to ensure students were consistently receiving the very best support.

Who was involved?

This was a whole school initiative as SEMH is everyone's responsibility, however key figures in the successful running of our provision include the Pastoral Inclusion Team i.e. SEMH practitioners, Heads of Year, SENDCo and safeguarding and welfare team.

Evaluation and Impact

Outcomes:

Students are provided immediate support which often mitigates the requirement for external services involvement (such as CAMHS) which typically have a waiting time over 6 months. Student behaviour and attendance has improved significantly through having weekly sessions in the Retreat. In the academic year (24-25), over 200 students have accessed timetabled support in the Retreat, this means that over 25% of the entire cohort at that time have been provided with targeted SEMH intervention support. 100% of looked after children (LAC) students received weekly support and guidance. 100% of SEN students have daily access to breaktime and lunchtime support club, improving their regulation, confidence and social skills development.

Feedback:

"Child A has gone from strength to strength since working with you in the Retreat. They are happier, healthier and more positive in all areas of their life. I am so grateful for the positive impact you have had on child A; they have adored their sessions and will be sad to have to end them when they leave in the summer." Parent of former student. "Thank you for delivering our assembly this morning. It was appreciated and needed, both engaging and informative; addressing 'the reality' of mental health and looking after yourself during stressful periods – the year 13's were visibly attentive and thoroughly enjoyed your calming presence" Pastoral Lead at a partner academy.

Wider Impact:

The Retreat is an essential component in how the best educational service is delivered to the young people at this school. This then permeates beyond the school walls and into the culture within the extended community. Colleagues at the school are extremely proud of the incredible progress their students make in terms of managing their social, emotional and mental health needs. This seamlessly challenges the stigma around the locality, illuminating how they have overcome barriers and adversities to inspire the next generation.

Learnings and Sustainability

Key Takeaways:

- Students thrive when they feel heard and when they are given the tools to develop their own independence.
- Through triangulating support between school, the child and home, a culture of robust support is created.
- SEMH is everyone's responsibility, which is why a culture should be promoted as a whole school priority.

Challenges Overcome:

- Creating safe space that students love to be in. This was an enormous project; to transform the Retreat Department into an area that promotes wellbeing. It was completed over a number of months due to the requirement for resources, furniture and decorating to be sourced and completed, with the addition of another large wellbeing space, Central Perk being added to the offer some months later.
- Creating a robust system for referrals, data collection, planning and tracking. Through exploring a number of avenues, the ability to create a digital and centralised referral system was essential to ensuring that every referral is traceable. The school used provision map to streamline all the data which they collect from meetings, pastoral and behaviour management, which is accessible to all staff to use, boosting accountability and efficiency.

Future Improvements:

Plan to expand the model into the primary phase provision of the all-through school. The SENDCo plans to embed more trauma informed awareness into the SEMH provision.

Inclusion Base

Summary

The school created their Inclusion Base as a provision to support reintegration, engagement and learning support.

School Profile

Phase	Secondary
Academy/Maintained	Academy
Locality	Suburban
Size	1452 (including sixth form)
EHCP (number)	77 (Including pupils in Designated Specialist Provision)
SEND register (%)	14.5%

Why did this work take place?

This facility was developed to support reintegration, engagement and learning support. The whole school curriculum was adapted to provide tailored bespoke support to enable individuals to access the mainstream curriculum. This was a deliberately personalised and holistic approach, including working closely with families.

Key objectives

The aims of this provision were to improve engagement and learning.

Actions

Provided an inclusive environment to support the needs of the students accessing the space. Adapted the whole school curriculum to provide tailored adaptations to enable individuals to access the mainstream curriculum. Provided a personalised and holistic approach, including working closely with families. Followed the Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR) cycle throughout.

Who was involved?

This was an initiative involving the SENDCo, SEND Managers and Curriculum Support Assistant.

Evaluation and Impact**Outcomes:**

These were Captured best on a case by case basis. Case studies collected, demonstrated that pupils agreed that they have a safe space that supports both attendance, well-being and academic progress in school.

Feedback:

“I just wanted to send you a quick thank you for seeing child A yesterday. They left school feeling very positive about the changes to their timetable and the support you gave them. They told me how lovely all the staff in the Inclusion Base were to them and how nice and quiet it was!” (Parent feedback)

“The Inclusion Base and your staff have made a very positive approach to enable child B to come back to school”. (Parent feedback)

Wider Impact:

The schools EHCP's have tripled in the last 3 years from 15 to 45. The Inclusion Base has been very much needed as a result. The success of the Inclusion Base has strengthened the inclusive culture of the school. (Staff, pupil and parent feedback)

Learnings and Sustainability

Key Takeaways:

- Engaging families early is critical to successful outcomes to develop effective home/school partnerships.
- The strategies used to adapt the curriculum to the needs of pupils in this way has deepened the inclusive culture across the school.

Challenges Overcome:

- Resource allocation is a constant challenge so regular review of SEND income and clarity on available resources is key.
- Staff training is a challenge due to the need to be agile around an ever-changing SEND picture across the school.

Future Improvements:

Greater cohesion across other teams in the school is needed. The SEND team will work with these teams to support complex young people in the school. (Pastoral team, Hub staff). The West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) Assistant Educational Psychology (EP) service have observed the inclusion base, trained staff and offered resources/ strategies.

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ASC	Autistic Spectrum Condition
CDC	Council for Disabled Children
CIN	Children in Need
CP	Child Protection
CYP	Children and Young People
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
DfE	Department for Education
DLD	Developmental Language Disorder
DLA	Disability Living Allowance
EBSA	Emotional Based School Avoidance
ELSA	Emotional Literacy Support Assistant
EHA	Early Help Assessment
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
EP	Educational Psychologist
EAL	English as an Additional Language
HARPS	Holistic Approach for The Reduction of Permanent Exclusions and Suspensions
HVST	Hearing and Vision specialist Support services
IIST	Inclusion and Intervention Support Team
KCSIE	Keeping Children Safe in Education

LA	Local Authority
Local Area	The area in which your school/setting is located
Local Offer	All local authorities are required to publish a 'local offer' which outlines information about provision it expects to be available to children with SEN and disabilities in their area both in and outside of school
MLD	Moderate learning difficulties
MSI	Multi-Sensory Impairment
Neurodiversity	Neurodiversity is the idea that differences in how people think, learn, process information, and experience the world are natural variations of the human brain, rather than deficits. It includes neurotypes such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and dyspraxia, and emphasizes valuing strengths while supporting individual needs.
IPT	Inclusive Provision Toolkit
OT	Occupational Therapist
PD	Physical Disability
QToD	Qualified Teacher of the Deaf
SASO	School Attendance Support Officer
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs
SEND Code of Practice	The statutory code that details the duties of professionals in meeting the needs of learners with SEND

SEND Code of Practice	The statutory code that details the duties of professionals in meeting the needs of learners with SEND
SENDIASS	SEND Information, Advice and Support Service
SEMH	Social, Emotional, Mental Health
SLCN	Speech Language and Communication Needs
SpLD	Specific Learning Disabilities
SST	Specialist SEND Teacher
Universal Support	What a school can ordinarily do as part of their normal way of working
WNVP	West Northamptonshire Voices in Partnership

Service	Contact	Link
Inclusion and intervention Support team (IIST)	IIST@westnorthants.gov.uk	Inclusion and Intervention Support Team (IIST) West Northamptonshire Council
Hearing and Vision specialist support for children and young people	hvst@northnorthants.gov.uk	Hearing and vision specialist support for children and young people West Northamptonshire Council
Educational Psychology Service	educpsychology@westnorthants.gov.uk	Educational Psychology Service Partnership Agreement West Northamptonshire Council
EHCP Assessment Team	ehcassessments@westnorthants.gov.uk	Contact education, health and care (EHC) team West Northamptonshire Council
EHCP Post-Assessment Team	ehcpostassessments@westnorthants.gov.uk	Contact education, health and care (EHC) team West Northamptonshire Council
EHCP Post-16, EOTIS and EHE Team	ehcpostassessments@westnorthants.gov.uk	Contact education, health and care (EHC) team West Northamptonshire Council
SENDIASS	sendiass@westnorthants.gov.uk	West Northants SEND IASS
NHS Speech and Language Therapy	childsalt@nhft.nhs.uk	Children's Therapy Services - Speech & Language Therapy Team NHFT
Inclusion Funding		Inclusion Funding West Northamptonshire Council
Specialist SEND Teacher Team (SST)	sst@westnorthants.gov.uk	Specialist SEND Teacher Team West Northamptonshire Council
SEMH	semhadmin.ncc@westnorthants.gov.uk	Social, emotional and mental health panel (SEMH) West Northamptonshire Council
Safeguarding	safeguardingineducation@westnorthants.gov.uk	About the Safeguarding in Education service West Northamptonshire Council
School Attendance Support Service		Attendance support West Northamptonshire Council
Virtual School	virtualschool@northnorthants.gov.uk	Virtual School West Northamptonshire Council

This Inclusive Provision Toolkit (IPT) has been developed through a truly collaborative and co-produced approach. It reflects the shared expertise, commitment and passion of partners across West Northamptonshire who are dedicated to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to colleagues across education, health and social care, including practitioners from mainstream schools and specialist provisions, who contributed their time and expertise throughout the development process. This included involvement in working parties, workshops, case studies, drafting sections, reviewing content, and providing invaluable feedback. Your willingness to share practice and reflect on what works effectively in settings has been instrumental in shaping this guidance.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the Ordinarily Available Provision Steering Group for their invaluable contribution throughout this work. The collective expertise, constructive challenge, and commitment to collaboration of this group made up of multi-agency partners has been instrumental in shaping a clear, practical, and inclusive toolkit. The strength of this work is a direct result of the open dialogue and co-production approach that has been consistently demonstrated, ensuring that the provision reflects the needs and perspectives of all partners and, most importantly, improves outcomes for children and young people.

We are grateful to West Northants Voices in Partnership (WNVP) for their role in ensuring that this toolkit is grounded in lived experience. Through workshops and engagement activities, families have shared their views, insights and reflections, helping to strengthen the authenticity and relevance of this document. Their voices have been essential in ensuring that co-production is at the heart of this work.

Our thanks also goes to all services across West Northamptonshire Council and partner organisations who have supported the development of this toolkit by writing sections, offering professional insight, attending workshops, and contributing to its ongoing refinement. This includes a wide range of multi-agency partners whose collective expertise has helped ensure a holistic and inclusive approach.

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Finally, we would like to recognise and thank all those who have contributed in any way to this toolkit, whether through feedback, discussion, collaboration, pilot projects or sharing examples of practice. This toolkit reflects a shared commitment to inclusion, partnership and continuous improvement, and we look forward to continuing this journey together.