

Pupil Support Services (PSS)

# The Enabling Classroom



## **Part A: Everybody**

*These are recommendations useful in all classrooms, for Quality First inclusive teaching in a supportive environment. Using these ideas should give every pupil the best chance. If these ideas are adopted, any adjustments practitioners might need to make for pupils with less common or more challenging needs will be smaller and easier to undertake. The classroom will therefore be an empowering place for learners. Further support and advice for putting these suggestions into practice is available from Pupil Support services.*

1. Routines and Systems.
2. Effective Classroom Skills.
3. Inclusive Lesson Design and Language for Learning.

## **Part B: Some Learners**

*This section provides more specific advice about including pupils who have additional needs. Further advice from specialist teams within Pupil Support Services is available on request.*

1. Enabling Hearing Impaired learners.
2. Enabling Visually Impaired learners.
3. Enabling Bilingual learners.
4. Enabling learners with Autistic Spectrum Conditions.
5. Enabling learners with Specific learning Difficulties.
6. Enabling Learners with Emotional, Social and Mental Health Issues.

## **Part C: Beyond the Classroom**

*Advice in this section covers wider aspects of the school, where systems, communication and relationships may impact on emotional health, learning and behaviour. Further advice relating to these issues is available from the BLIS and CLASS teams within Pupil Support Services.*

1. Enabling learners during unstructured time.
2. Enabling communication with families: 20 tips.
3. Enabling learners during assembly.

## **Glossary.**

Find information about local services available to schools  
on [tameside.school-services.net](http://tameside.school-services.net)

## The Enabling Classroom

‘Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, even where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff.’ **(P71, Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014)**

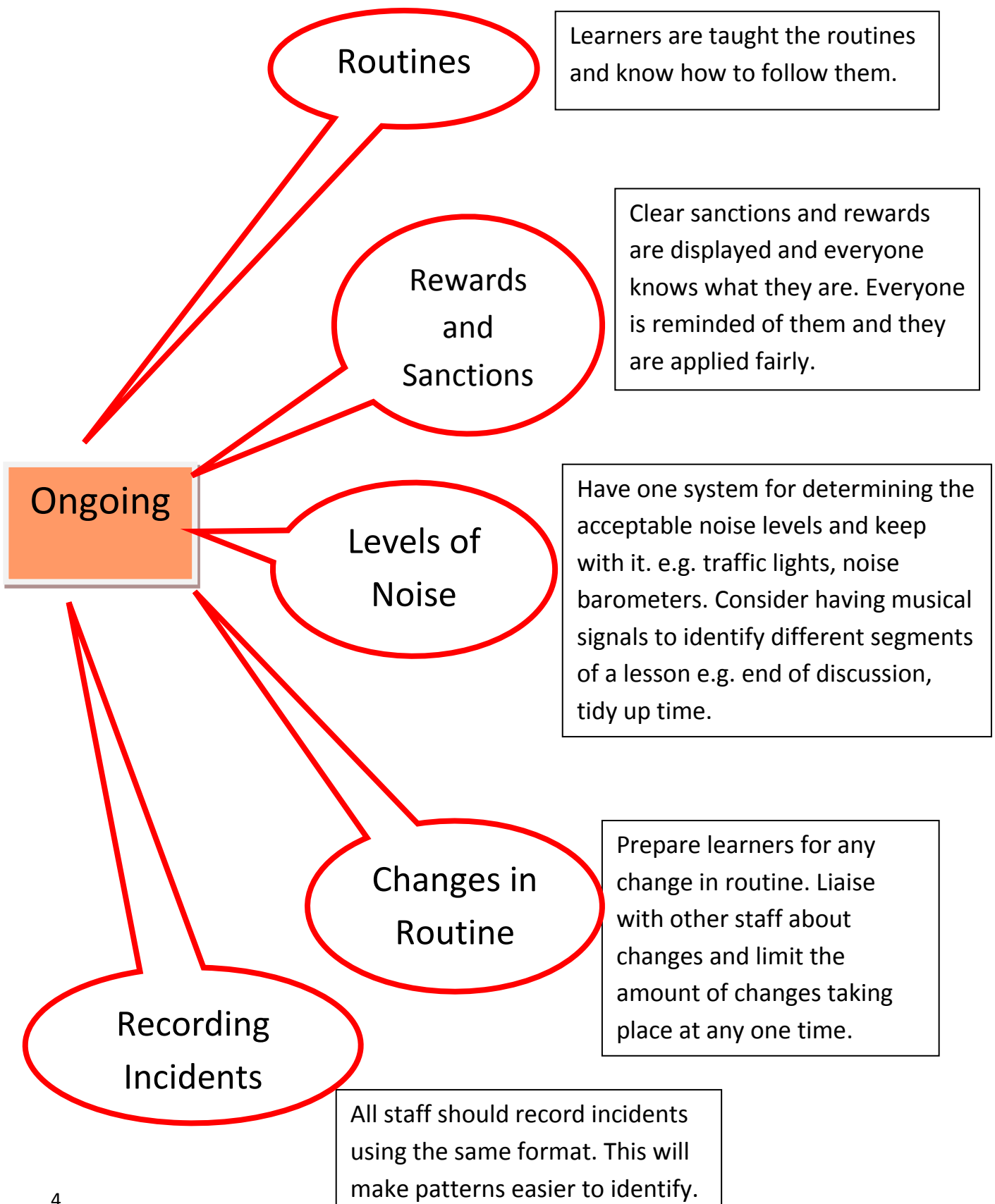
‘When evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in the school, inspectors consider the extent to which well judged teaching strategies, including setting challenging tasks matched to pupils’ learning needs, successfully engage all pupils in their learning.’ **(OFSTED Framework for school Inspection 2012)**

‘Instruction does much, but encouragement everything.’  
**Goethe**

‘Teachers have three loves: love of learning, love of learners and the love of bringing the first two loves together.’ **Scott Hayden**

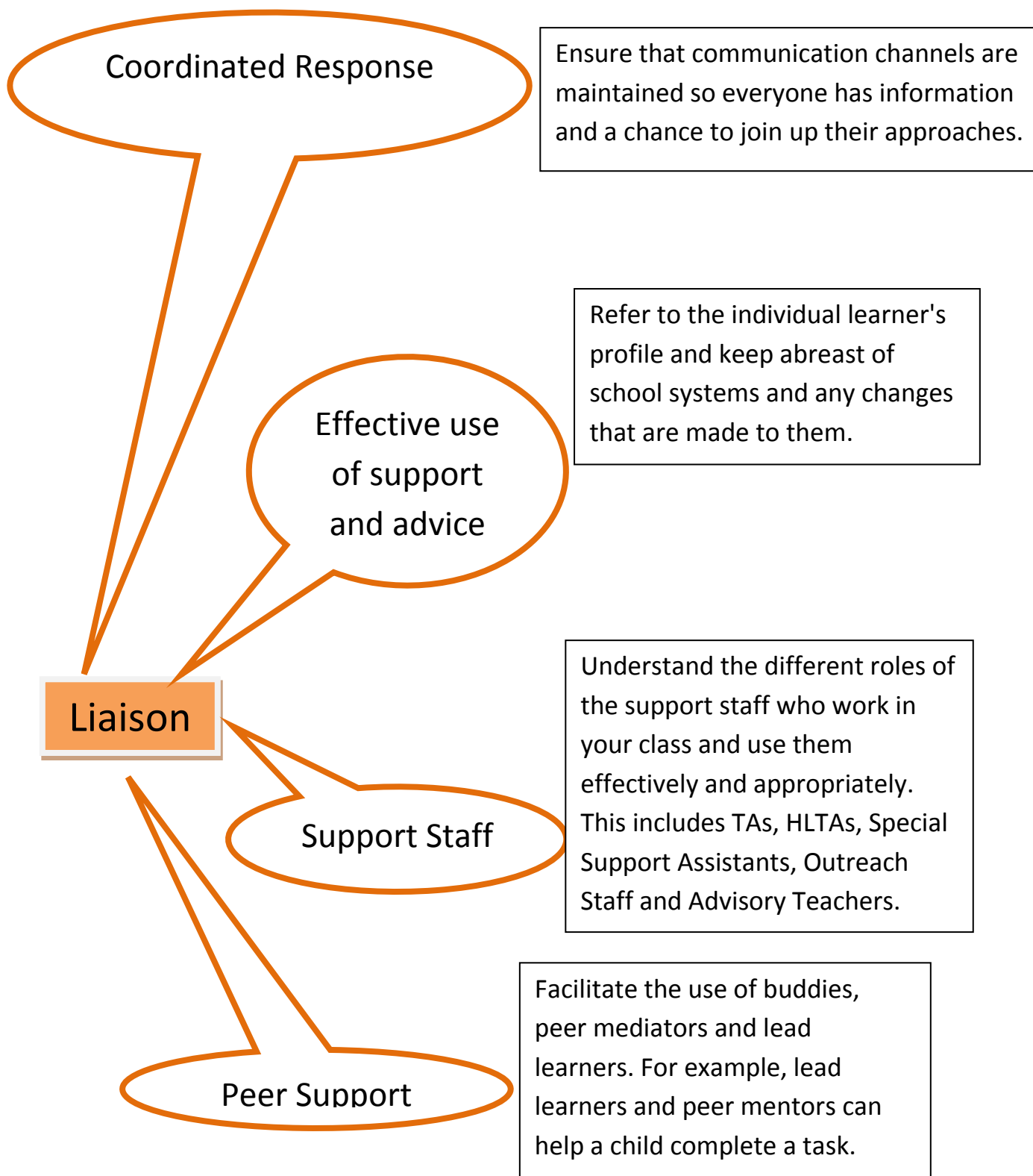
## Routines and systems for the Enabling Classroom

Be Prepared to be Flexible and Adaptable



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# Routines and systems for the Enabling Classroom

## Be Prepared to be Flexible and Adaptable

Seating Arrangements

Ensure there is enough carpet space. Consider the individual learner's working area and group learners accordingly.

Space for Movement

As far as possible, try to manage the available space to allow for safe movement.

Layout

A clear view of the IWB and Teacher

This applies for all learners. Please consider seating them somewhere else if they are unable to see.

### **Effective practitioners continuously:**

- remain aware of the language and communication needs of the learners.
- adjust the pace of the lesson, so the learners remain focussed and engaged.

### **Attention and focus are supported when practitioners..**

- face whoever they are talking to and gain their attention first.
- address learners by name.
- make sure glare and shadows do not affect view for learners.
- avoid standing in front of a window, or anywhere else which turns them into a silhouette.

### **Understanding and engagement are enhanced when practitioners...**

- give learners time to think, process and prepare, understanding that time needed varies between different learners.
- regularly check understanding, even if the learner has a support worker.

## **Effective Classroom Skills**

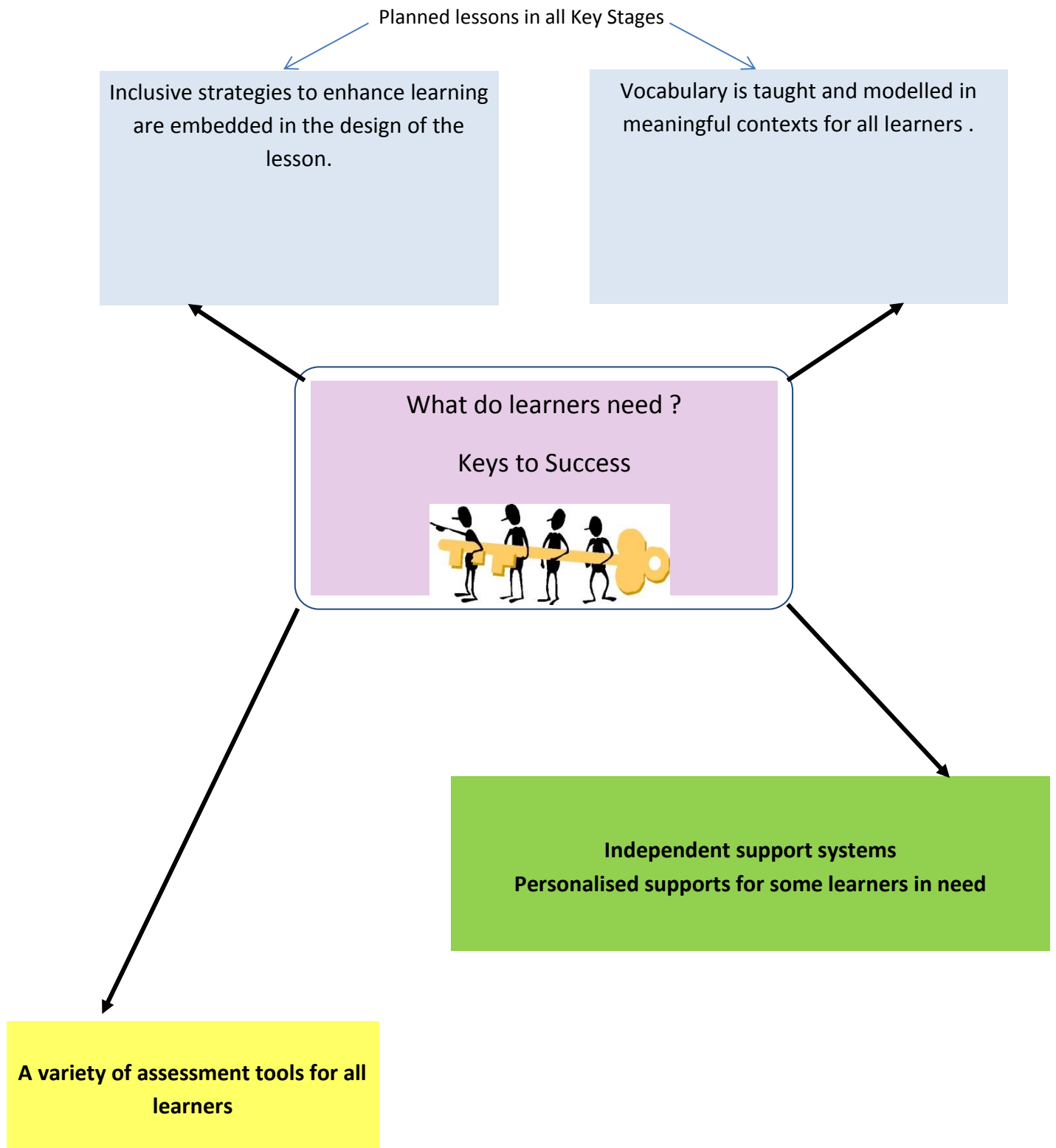
### **The spoken word is more effective when practitioners..**

- allow repetition, including learners repeating others' contributions.
- verbalise what is being written on the board.
- use a cueing in phrase or a learner's name before talking or issuing instructions.
- give gentle prompts and encouragement so more learners verbalise lesson content.
- modulate their own tone of voice to sound calm and interesting.
- give advance notice of some key questions they will be asking.
- use a variety of questioning techniques and other prompts.

### **Good behaviour can be maintained if practitioners..**

- maintain a calm atmosphere.
- make pupils aware of their expectations – this makes good choices more likely.
- develop an awareness of the emotional climate of class and individuals.
- foster good relationships with learners and other practitioners, because it is part of the job.
- consider carefully how to discuss behaviour issues with learners, because this needs differentiation, just like lesson content needs it.

# Inclusive Lesson Design and Language for Learning





## Experiences of curriculum content are enhanced for all learners when...

- **Multimodal and multisensory experiences** are embedded into lesson design. These maximise understanding by giving learners physical and visual opportunities to engage with content in more than one way. Provision of additional materials e.g. a script of a film clip, or extra opportunities, such as time to stop and review clips, will increase the level of support.
- **Hands-on interaction** with artefacts and high quality images is part of the lesson. High quality photographic images are projected onto the board to illustrate new ideas and content during teacher talk. Some learners will benefit from early opportunities to interact with the artefacts and images before the lesson.
- **Key questions are raised early** in the lesson and displayed prominently to enable learners to consider the questions and to begin to prepare and rehearse their responses as they are learning.
- **Collaborative approaches to learning** are used within group work, to enable pupils to discuss, and to share ideas informally, using their prior knowledge to support the learning. Collaborative task design has a tightly structured language focus with opportunities for repetition and overlearning. Collaborative approaches sit well with 'Kagan' techniques.
- There are **planned opportunities to retell ideas and to consolidate understanding**. **Repeating and clarifying ideas with others** helps learners to embed lesson content and their understanding of key concepts.
- **Age appropriate ICT programs and Apps** are used, chosen with the learner's language skills in mind (e.g. 'Clicker'). ICT is a powerful tool in enabling a learner to transform his/her learning by interacting with multimodal platforms. Using text to speech programmes can support many pupils.
- **The quantity and size of print reflects the needs of the learner**. Many learners are supported to digest content when smaller chunks are used, both on printed matter and when displayed on the board. Size of print on the board needs to be visible from all seating positions.
- **Graphic organisers** – these are tables and diagrams such as cause and effect grids, timelines and flowcharts. There are many different kinds. They reflect logical connections in a diagram form. They support pupils on many levels. The choice of an organiser format can become a powerful tool which enables the learner to adopt and use subject specific expressions, text forms and language associated with particular genres.

## Use and understanding of subject vocabulary expands when...

- Learners have access to **age appropriate illustrated Word banks** and categorised lists of specific curriculum or topic language and terminology . These enable the learner to engage with and to acquire the vocabulary within the context of the learning. We all learn new words through repeated encounters in meaningful contexts.
- **Displays feature clearly labelled words relevant to the curriculum topic, with visuals where appropriate.** Some displays may also have captions or short chunks of text showing the words used in meaningful context.
- **Specific key vocabulary** items are **targeted, taught and modelled** for the learner, and revisited in a meaningful context.
- **Colour coding and highlighting or text-marking** helps learners to access and understand vocabulary in context and this has a significant impact on written outcomes.
- **Talk opportunities are built into tasks** to enable learners to **retell content informally** and to **rehearse and model vocabulary and grammatical structures** before expressing ideas in formal talk. Formal talk is an essential precursor to writing. **“If they can’t think it and say it, they can’t write it down.”** This applies to all areas of the curriculum.

## Developing independence -

support all learners to stay on task by giving:

- Checklists of the elements within the task to enable the learner to track his/her progress ( including visual symbol trackers where appropriate.)
- Access to clear systems of peer/adult support; buddies, lead learners, or mentors who can model talk, help to clarify ideas and signpost to next steps.
- Ready access to images, dictionaries and reference materials.
- Lots of praise for using support systems

Having systems in place will enable learners to move towards increased independence and confidence. When taught to use the systems, learners will gain self-management and organisational skills. Vulnerable learners will feel supported if the systems are clear to them.

### **Some learners will require more built in support. Pave the way to success by...**

- **Breaking down the demands of the task and the number of processes required.** Multi-process working can cause overload. Some learners may struggle to listen whilst writing. Reading and simultaneously formulating an answer to a question about the content is also challenging. Identify manageable steps for each learner.
- **Allowing extra time to think and to share ideas. The '3 second gap' does not take account of the needs of all the learners in the classroom.**
- **Setting realistic task times and appropriate expectations** to match the skill set of the individual learner.
- **Grouping flexibly** to give all learners exposure to working within higher ability groupings. This will enable pupils who usually work in higher dependency supported groups to demonstrate particular strengths and skills (e.g. problem solving or practical skills) and provide opportunities to work with peers who offer good role models of study skills.

## Assessments are inclusive when....

- **Varied approaches** are embedded within the class assessment systems. Practitioners who regularly use a variety of approaches will find ways of making simple adjustments to assessments for individual learners.
- **Oral testing** can sometimes be used in place of written assessments. Consider when pupils might be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills without the need for well-developed literacy skills.
- **Any pre-set language and learning targets** are included. If individual pupils have **specific language and learning targets**, discuss how to work towards them with the pupil and with staff who are in regular contact with them.
- **A variety of methods are used to express ideas, knowledge and understanding.** These might include the use of grids, including KWL (I know, I want to find out, I learned...), diagrams both rough and neat, fast sketches on a whiteboard, and non-verbal communication methods. Graphic organisers can be linked to the language features of a subject.
- Learners use practical demonstration to show their understanding of concepts and content. They harness a range of images, media, recording devices and physical objects to demonstrate their ideas.

## The Learner with Hearing Impairment

If you have a child in your school/class who you think may not be accessing the curriculum because of their hearing, contact the Sensory Support Service at [michele.eaton@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:michele.eaton@tameside.gov.uk)

or call 0161 342 4268

### General tips on managing the classroom environment and teaching the learner with hearing impairment

- Always face the student when talking to them.
- Make sure you have the students visual attention and use a cueing in phrase.
- Don't cover your face with hands or objects.
- Use clear natural speech patterns and rhythms.
- Keep language clear and simple.
- Don't make a pupil concentrate on lip reading for too long without a break.
- Do not walk about while addressing the class.
- Do not stand with your back to the window or the interactive whiteboard.
- When addressing the class stand away from interactive whiteboards, TVs, etc.
- Provide handouts to supplement spoken information.
- Provide supporting handouts or transcripts to go with audio, video or TV.
- Allow pupils time to look at visual aids/instructions before talking. HI pupils may miss spoken information if they are not looking at you when you give instructions.

- The pupil may not be able to attend to a worksheet and listen to a voiceover at the same time.
- The pupil will need to sit near the front of the class but slightly to one side as it can be hard looking up all the time.
- The pupil may not be able to cope with dictation as they may not be able to lip-read and write at the same time.
- The pupil will need a clear view of the teacher's face.
- The pupil may use visual clues from lip-reading, gesture or visual aids.
- The pupil will need the classroom well lit for lip-reading.
- The pupil may not be able to follow the voiceover on the TV or interactive whiteboard.
- Be aware of other noises in the classroom which can make it more difficult for the pupil to hear what is going on.
- A teacher's voice can be drowned out by classroom noises, e.g. chairs scraping, pencils tapping, other pupils talking.
- Where possible repeat other pupils' contributions as the pupil may not have heard them.

## The Learner with Visual Impairment

If you have a child in your school/class who you think may not be accessing the curriculum because of their vision, contact the Sensory Support Service at [sensory.supportservice@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:sensory.supportservice@tameside.gov.uk) or call 0161 342 4029

### General tips on managing the classroom environment and teaching the learner with visual impairment

- Lighting may need to be kept switched on all the time for some learners, whilst other learners may be photophobic and prefer lower lighting levels.
- Window blinds help reduce glare.
- Reflective surfaces can be covered to reduce glare.
- Avoid standing in front of the window when teaching or speaking to the learners, as the learner may only be able to see a silhouette of you.
- Position the learner in the most suitable place to access the whiteboard, interactive white board, demonstration, carpet activity. The learner needs to remain part of the group, and may need to sit in different places for different activities.
- A partially sighted learner sometimes copes well with materials on one occasion and then on another day, claims he or she cannot manage. For some learners lighting conditions, or contrast are critical, or they may have a variable eye condition. 'Seeing' for some learners requires a great deal of effort and concentration, which in turn may affect their motivation, due to the visual fatigue they experience after prolonged periods of close work.
- Include the learner in the class in the best way that enables full interaction with the other learners.

- Avoid sharing worksheets or textbooks. (If the learner is accessing from them.)
- Speak to the learner by name, particularly when they have their hand up to answer a question.
- Allow for additional space at the learner's desk for specialist equipment etc.
- Allow storage space in the classroom for folders and equipment to be kept in an organised and easily retrievable way.
- Consistency is crucial; always keep things in the same place and avoid changing the layout of the classroom, as the learner will have to learn a new mental map of the route to their desk and to other key places in the room.



If you have queries about English as an Additional Language, contact the Equality, Multiculturalism and Access Team (EMAT) on 0161 343 8381

## **Enabling Classrooms for Bilingual Learners**

*Consider working in partnership with an English as an Additional Language teacher from Pupil Support Services and/or attending EAL training with PSS, the Northern Association of Support Services for Equality and Achievement (NASSEA), the North-West Ethnic Minority Achievement Hub or the National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (NALDIC). Be aware of Equalities issues in the school, including, for example, displays reflective of diversity and diversity training for ancillary staff.*

### **International New Arrivals (INA)**

- Contact PSS well before the pupil starts – [rita.mistry@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:rita.mistry@tameside.gov.uk)
- The International New Arrivals Form completed by the Education Welfare Officer will be your starting point for the hugely important and sometimes complex task of understanding the pupil's background, educational history and language use. Continue finding out as much as you can from the pupil and the family. Never make assumptions: patterns of language use can be surprising, and education systems differ a lot.
- Buddy up the pupil with a few friendly, able pupils who will take turns at being responsible for showing the new arrival around during the early days. If they share the task, nobody feels a strain and the new pupil will meet more friends.
- New arrivals need time to observe, tune in and find out how the school works. Provide opportunities for the pupil to join in all practical lessons straight away. Keep the pupil in the main classroom most of the time, so s/he can watch and listen. Provide respite activities.
- Do not try to assess anything during the first few weeks; the result will be a misleading picture of the pupil's skills.

### **Early Stage Bilingual Learners**

- Encourage pupils to use their strongest language to support learning, with dictionaries, phrase books, bilingual resources and a little, careful, use of Google translate (beware of errors, but also of using it too much, because it can prevent English skills from developing).
- Tap into prior knowledge via images, discovery tasks and practical experiences.
- As much as possible, seat early stage learners with friendly, articulate classmates who offer good role models of study skills and use of English. Many early stage learners are very able, so expect fast progress. Flexible grouping is the best solution.

- Discuss tactics with any support staff – the best way to accelerate progress for these learners is to build vocabulary and give extra speaking and listening practice connected to daily routines in school and current units of study.
- Provide structured language activities using content from your lessons, e.g. tops and tails, blank filling, sequencing and labelling.
- Use an appropriate form of assessment, e.g. the NASSEA EAL Assessment Framework.
- Whole words, especially nouns and verbs met in lessons, are the priority for very early stage pupils. Phonics tuition becomes helpful when the pupil has a repertoire of spoken English vocabulary and is familiar with the way spoken English sounds.
- Early stage reading resources should have content and vocabulary already familiar to the pupil.

### Later Stage Bilingual learners

- Inclusive lesson designs will meet many needs of this group. However, practitioners need to be aware that these learners will have unexpected gaps in their academic language and their knowledge, and be prepared to recognise, then deal with difficulties of this nature as they occur.
- Comprehension and inference skills are likely to need scaffolding with supporting talk about the context and explanations about how inference is drawn.
- Extra examples and practice time support these learners.
- Vocabulary development remains a challenge for later stage bilingual learners, even for high achievers. Having a vocabulary focus in context, revisiting, discussing and revising word meanings is very supportive. Encourage older pupils to be pro-active in collecting words and building glossaries.
- Because every subject area has its own language style, teaching how sentences tend to be structured within each subject will raise attainment.
- Give feedback to the pupils about their use of English.
- Be aware that these learners find figurative language and idiomatic expressions difficult so they may need support to understand.

**Using Interpreters:** if you have never worked with an interpreter before, please remember to address the client and not the interpreter. Leave gaps after each point you are making so the interpreter does not have to remember a lot of things at once. At the end of the meeting, ask the client to review the main points from her perspective, so you can be sure no information was lost.

## The Learner with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

**Terminology:** *Autistic Spectrum Disorder (A.S.D.) is also referred to as Autistic Spectrum Condition (A.S.C.) and both terms are in regular use.*

**If you have a child in your school/class whom you think may not be accessing the curriculum because of A.S.D. contact:** Admin Manager, C.L.A.S.S. ASD Resource Base, St. John Fisher R.C. Primary School, Manor Road, DENTON, M34 7SW

Tel: 0161 320 5232 Fax: 0161 320 7633e.mail: [class.outreach@st-johnfisher.tameside.sch.uk](mailto:class.outreach@st-johnfisher.tameside.sch.uk)  
web: <https://tamesideschool-service.net>

### General tips on managing the classroom environment and teaching the learner with A.S.D.

- Seat the learner with A.S.D. diagonally to the interactive whiteboard and within the teacher's line of vision – diagonal rather than direct eye contact is more comfortable.
- Seat him/her near the wall or at end of the row – the pupil will be physically more comfortable with only one person next to him/her and you can subtly monitor his/her progress in passing his/her desk.
- Aim to provide a calm environment to avoid sensory overload and consider the child's individual sensory issues when doing your seating plan e.g. away from the doorway or window.
- Use his name to cue him/her in before you start teaching and before you switch to a new activity.
- Try to structure tasks and lessons as much as possible, to help the student remain on task.
- Write the Objective and Key Words on the board to aid recall and have them already in the child's book if necessary.
- Provide re-cap of previous lesson to help the student focus.
- Give instructions one at a time and information in chunks to aid his weak processing skills.
- Give him/her extra time to respond when answering questions as he/she struggles to process information.
- Avoid sarcasm or jokes as he/she has literal interpretation and remember that his language level is lower than that of his peers.
- Aim to keep your voice low and offer help when he is in distress- s/he is unlikely to be able to interpret your facial expression.

- Provide a noticeboard of each day's plans and times to encourage independence and so reduce his/her tendency to ask repetitive questions.
- Warn in advance if there is to be a change of teacher/ classroom/activity/fire drill practice/cancelled assembly etc.
- Insist on a clutter-free desk to reduce distraction – only allow equipment needed for the session.
- Seat away from a colourful notice-board or window, particularly during writing tasks. Consider the use of a workstation for independent work.
- Provide some or all of these - demonstration/pictures/examples/framework/written instructions as s/he finds it easier to process visually and work to a checklist.
- Check s/he has understood the instructions before he/she starts the task - ask him/her 1:1 to verbally summarise the instructions- he/she is unlikely to ask for help or admit to being unsure of instructions.
- Pre-warn - cue by name first- of your intention to ask him/her a question - keep it short and expect a short answer. Limit choices of activity for the pupil (e.g. for Golden Time offer the choice of A or B rather than “What do you want to do next?”).
- For group work/sport select good role models, rather than letting him/her choose. Limit the numbers and give each learner a number so that s/he is aware of expectations e.g. all the Number 1s to write down the measurements.
- In group work, limit the numbers to reduce his/her tendency to become either passive or domineering and avoid sharing of books and resources where possible.
- Consider the use of a ‘Peer Buddy System’ but be specific about its duration as there is a tendency for the learner with A.S.D. to become overly reliant on the Buddy which is not only stressful for the Buddy but also unfairly reduces the Buddy's opportunities to interact with others.
- Limit the amount of written work e.g. accept highlighting of key phrases in print-off and work done on computer as he/she tires easily when recording information due to weak motor skills associated with the condition.
- Encourage computer use for longer pieces of work as it enables editing (he/she is usually reluctant to re-draft), is more legible for revision and also improves organisational skills.
- Reduce detail on worksheets by covering sections of it with “post it” notes or provide information in sections so that he does not become overwhelmed.

- Give clear expectations of the amount of work expected and timescale with regular time checks including electronic countdown to end of lesson/task. Provide a visual checklist of instructions for longer pieces of work.
- Be specific about the amount of homework you require and its deadline.
- Check homework is recorded/handed in/equipment organised for each lesson e.g. D.&T. apron/P.E. kit as s/he is likely to have poor organisational skills.
- Check homework instructions are accurately recorded especially if given near the end of the lesson- T.A. support may be needed here as s/he cannot multi-task.
- Provide 'brain breaks' during the lesson and allow time in the day for younger children to engage in their special interest as a reward for completed work.
- Place him/her at the beginning or end of queue as it is less threatening than being in the middle.
- Allow "Time Out" to designated person or safe haven if particularly agitated.
- Arrange a weekly meeting with designated person (A.S.D. knowledgeable) to discuss any difficulties and so reduce anxiety.
- Use the C.L.A.S.S. Telephone Consultation Service ([Tel:0161/320/5232](tel:01613205232) Mon- Fri. 8.30-12.30) for initial/ additional support or further explanation.

### **Strategies recommended specifically for Early Years.**

- Use a mat or cushion for the pupil to sit on at Carpet Time
- Consider the use of a fidget toy for selected children
- Provide a calm space for the pupil to use, to avoid stress or sensory overload
- Do not use "The Look" - it may not work as s/he struggles to interpret facial expression
- Use animated gestures and expressions when talking about emotions
- Encourage pupil to access all areas of the classroom rather than his/her preferred activities by using a choice board (First ... and then... )
- Keep language simple when issuing instructions in chunks
- Use a visual and auditory signal such as a countdown to pre-warn of transition to another task (e.g. home time)
- Provide the pupil with a visual timetable – start with objects of reference, moving onto photographs and then on to black and white Boardmaker symbols
- New activities should be modelled visually rather than relying upon verbal instructions
- Consider the child's sensory issues when asking him/her to put on an apron or use hands for messy activities.

## The Learner with Emotional, Social and Mental Health Issues.

If you have a child in your school/class who you think may not be accessing the curriculum because of EBSD, contact BLIS at [julie.chorlton@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:julie.chorlton@tameside.gov.uk)

or call 0161 343 8381

### General tips on managing the classroom environment and teaching the child with EBSD

- Seat the pupil next to a good role model.
- Divide work up into sections the pupil finds manageable, or make tasks short, with frequent breaks and opportunities to move around.
- If a pupil needs time to calm down or remove themselves from the classroom have an agreed system to allow them to do this and agree on a safe place.
- Focus on *Primary Behaviours* - Primary Behaviours occur first and are generally what will trigger a reaction from an adult (e.g. being in the wrong place, being off task). To divert attention from the mistake they have made or the behaviour they have got wrong, children use secondary behaviours. Secondary behaviours include non-verbal actions such as sighs, tuts, rolling of the eyes etc. They are best ignored at the time and picked up later if necessary, at a time when there is no audience. This prevents escalation.
- Model the behaviour you want to see: The most damaging riposte a child can utter when talking about inappropriate behaviour is: 'well you do it!' E.g. if a child shouts at you don't shout back.
- Allow take up time for requests – this reduces pressure.
- Give instructions one at a time: they need to be clear and simple.
- Teach and use clear classroom rules and routines; display the rules for everyone to refer to. Rules need to be phrased positively i.e. state what you want to see happening, not what you don't, e.g. 'Put your hand up to answer a question' is a better rule than 'No shouting out'.
- Label the behaviour not the child- It is the behaviour that is unacceptable not the child. E.g. 'Tom, calling people names is rude.' Rather than, 'You are so rude.'

- Routines need to be planned to provide a predictable and reliable structure where children feel safe and cared for. They also need to be taught. For example if you want pupils to line up in a particular place in a certain way, it needs to be taught.
- Give clear expectations of the amount of work expected, and appropriate timescales with regular checks including countdown to the end of task/lesson.
- Rule reminder- If a pupil is behaving inappropriately then ask them what the rule is about that behaviour, or point to the rule on the wall.
- Use visual prompts- point to a visual reminder like a picture, to refocus the child's attention.
- Catch them being good- Be proactive and deliberate in noticing what pupils do that is acceptable and appropriate. This can significantly increase the likelihood that they will repeat the behaviour.
- Adults working with children/young people will need to have a common approach and need to give the same messages with regard to boundaries. Boundaries need to be clear and well defined but flexible enough to accommodate individual circumstances.
- Consequences should be fair and appropriate and need to be carried through.
- Planned ignoring- Decide what behaviours can be ignored, for how long and importantly what you will do next. Somethings should NEVER be ignored such as racist or sexist comments and unsafe or violent behaviour.
- The broken record approach- calmly repeating the direction two or three times without entering into any discussion can assertively reinforce your instructions.
- Use 'When and Then'- E.g. 'When you are in your seat then I will check your work.'
- 'Thank you'- Finishing the instruction with 'thank you' rather than 'please' conveys a strong sense of expectation. E.g. 'Jane put the skipping rope in the box, thank you.'
- Build positive relationships with pupils- Greet pupils each day and speak to them individually, take an interest not only in what they do in school but also outside of school.

## The Learner with Specific Learning Difficulties.

If you have a child in your school/class who you think may not be accessing the curriculum because of SPLD/Dyslexia, contact [helen.heard-white@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:helen.heard-white@tameside.gov.uk) or [amanda.edwards@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.edwards@tameside.gov.uk).

or call 0161 343 8381

### General tips on managing the classroom environment and teaching the child with SPLD

- Children report that effective teachers are enthusiastic, patient, helpful and don't shout if you get things wrong. Create an emotionally secure learning environment in which differences are accepted and planned for and where strengths are recognised and valued despite other difficulties.
- The least effective were those who gave too many instructions too fast and didn't allow enough time to complete work, embarrassed you in front of the class, assumed you were lazy or deliberately slow and shouted all the time.
- Utilise multisensory approaches to learning and learning styles. Chunk tasks into smaller sections.
- Make use of ICT where appropriate. For example speech to text and text to speech software. iPads, tablets and word processors.
- Plan for differentiation of tasks and outcome, including alternative ways of recording – e.g. matching, sequencing, sorting, highlighting, pictures, diagrams, flow charts.
- Arrange for children to see/discuss text or tasks prior to lesson if possible.
- Provide practical aids to encourage independent learning – e.g. number lines, calculators, place value cards, writing frames, word lists (key words and topic words), pictorial task cards, 'bed' card. Children could have their own equipment pack/s.
- Writing frames can also be useful for helping children to structure their writing, offering additional support to those who find sequencing difficult. Avoid bright sunshine and fluorescent lighting if possible.
- Use a variety of ways to explain and inform – e.g. illustrations, diagrams, pictures, teacher modelling, practical examples and demonstrations.



- Use colour to distinguish between ideas. Encourage all children to use colour in their work to do this. Use a variety of colours on the board to separate lines, sections or columns.
- Give a choice of pastel coloured paper for children to use rather than white. Coloured overlays could be useful for reading.
- Keep worksheets clear and not too 'busy' (use Comic Sans).
- Keep copying to a minimum.
- Use visual timetables.
- Give transcripts or photocopies rather than ask the child to read or write from the board.
- Build in opportunities for over-learning and repetition.
- Draw the child's attention before giving instructions. Limit verbal instructions to 2 at a time.
- Give instructions carefully and clearly. Ask the child to repeat the task to you. Be prepared to repeat the instructions, in a different way if necessary.
- Group according to the requirements of the task, not by literacy level, unless specifically teaching literacy skills.
- Seat dyslexic children away from distractions and next to children who are good at focusing on learning.
- Seat dyslexic children where the teacher can make eye contact easily.
- Pupil may require additional time to respond to questions. If possible, provide advanced warning of a question for them to answer, especially within a whole class setting.
- Pupils will require additional time to complete tasks due to their processing speed difficulties.
- Aim to keep the noise level down and encourage a calm working atmosphere.

# Beyond the Classroom – Enabling Learners During Unstructured Time

## Providing some structure

- Have age appropriate activities and lunchtime clubs, so there is less unstructured time outside.
- Introduce and teach games and pastimes pupils can adopt, or arrange for supervised games.

## Deploy staff and volunteers effectively

- Develop playground roles for some buddies or peer mediators.
- Update staff training and empower supervisory staff.
- Ensure senior staff, including members of the Leadership Team are visibly engaged in supervising and mixing with the pupils during these times.
- Consider use of sports coaches during lunchtimes.

## Resources

- Get a variety of resources to cater for different needs, ages and interests.
- For wet play, provide appropriate travelling boxes, replenished when needed.
- Provide supervisory staff with rewards and stickers, timers, visual prompts.

## Management

- Stagger lunchtimes so that there is less crowding.
- Improve the layout of the playground, introduce zones for (e.g.) active play, quiet conversation, green space ...
- Have good behaviour management plans in place, link to charts in school, use of rewards and sanctions as in the classroom so that the same systems are in operation.

## Enabling Communication with Families: 20 Tips

### ✓ **Smile when you see parents and carers**

Greet them. Most parents only occasionally interact with teachers so make sure that at least 90 percent of your encounters with them are positive, warm, and friendly. The impressions left from fleeting encounters last a long time.

### ✓ **Learn their names**

Learn how parents/carers prefer to be addressed (e.g. Mr. \_\_\_\_? By first name? ) and how to pronounce names correctly.

### ✓ **Declare your intention**

Tell them that you want to work in partnership with them; that you appreciate their support and look forward to working together.

### ✓ **Communicate often and in various forms (e.g. text, newsletter, email)**

Provide information about what's going on in your class (weekly would be ideal): what students are learning, what they've accomplished, what you're excited about, what they're excited about, and the learning and growth you're seeing. Suggest things that they might ask their child about.

### ✓ **Make positive phone calls home**

Phone calls are powerful tools, and receiving a positive message is a tremendous boost. Some families may benefit from more frequent calls.

### ✓ **Lead with the good news**

Give positive praise first when calling parents/carers or meeting with them to discuss a concern. Everyone has something good about him/her. Find it and share it. Then share your concern. Adhere strictly to this rule.

### ✓ **Find an interpreter**

If you can't speak the language, seek an interpreter for at least one meeting and/or phone call. (For obscure languages, you can sometimes find a refugee center or other public agency that can help). Reach out to those parents/carers as well; do whatever you can to connect.

### ✓ **Your language is powerful**

The words you use may infer value judgments about what is seen as 'normal'. Show that you are aware that there are many different kinds of families and that you do not to assume a mother is,

or isn't married, or even if she is married, that she's married to a man. Learn to ask open-ended questions and understand that sometimes parents/guardians might not want to share some information.

✓ **Ask questions about the learner**

"What kinds of things does he enjoy doing outside of school? Who are the special people in her life -- family or family friends? What do you think are her best characteristics? What was he like as a little boy?" Demonstrate an interest in finding out more about your student.

✓ **Listen to parents**

Listen well to parents/carers; they know their child best.

✓ **Smile at the learner**

When talking to an adult in front of a child, smile and make eye contact with the student to demonstrate that you care about him/her. Recognise what he/she has done well in your class in front of the adults. *Then* share a concern, if you have one.

✓ **Invite parents to share**

Distribute a survey at the beginning of the year (if parents don't read/write in English, students can interview them and relay their answers). Find out what hobbies, interests or skills for sharing parents/carers may have. Invite them in especially if it connects the curriculum and content. Let them share with you their cultural traditions, interests, passions, skills and knowledge.

✓ **Let parents know how they can help**

Many parents/carers want to help but especially as children get older, they aren't asked for help as often and don't know what to do. There's always some way they can help in the classroom.

✓ **Be very specific**

Provide ways adults can support their child at home: e.g. an agreed number of minutes reading together.

✓ **Be a broker of resources**

If adults share a concern, be prepared to direct them to a source of help.

✓ **Explain your instructional decisions**

Take the time to do this and help them learn about the education system if they're not familiar with it. Help them understand what you're doing and why.

✓ **Invite adults to participate in making some decisions**

Invite their input, give them information that will help them form an opinion, and listen to their conclusions.

✓ **Thank parents/carers**

Both individually and publicly for their support, perhaps in a newsletter. Recognise what they do to help your class and how their support benefits students.

✓ **Share Every Success**

Let adults know what their child is doing well, what academic skills, social skills or knowledge s/he's demonstrated.

✓ **Invite parents/carers to celebrate and get together**

Communities are strengthened when people come together in celebration.

## Enabling Learners During Assembly: What Creates the Best Conditions?

Every assembly is relevant.

The needs of learners with particular issues are taken into account, so that staff can adjust the experience for individuals where needed.

Good behaviour is fostered:

- Adults model the behaviour they wish the learners to adopt.
- Adults encourage learners to be interested in assembly, by designing the experience well, and by talking about assembly in class.
- Adults attend assembly with the class.
- Learners are noticed when they conform, and they are praised when 'caught being good'.
- Provision of something extra to look at, even projecting simple pictures to illustrate some of the content, adds interest and will encourage learners to stay focussed.

Everyone can hear and see everything:

- There is no shame in using a microphone – it enables speakers to be more expressive.
- Standing in front of a bright light or bright window reduces the speaker to a silhouette, but standing on even a slightly raised surface enables presenters to use gesture and eye contact more effectively.
- Blinds or curtains are adjusted as needed before assembly starts.

Considering the length of time learners are being asked to sit still:

- Will they need to sit still and listen quietly again immediately after assembly?
- How comfortable are they going to be? Are there any ways of making the experience more comfortable?
- Can some messages be given at other times, or in other ways, so that assembly design remains as interactive and as pacy as possible?

## Glossary.

*Provided with the understanding that some colleagues may be newly appointed and unfamiliar with all the terminology used.*

**Pupil Support services (PSS):** Tameside's support service, which includes the Sensory Support Team, the Communication, Language and Autistic Spectrum Support Work group (CLASS), the Behaviour for learning and Inclusion Service (BLIS) the Specific learning Difficulties Team (SPLD) and the Equality, multiculturalism and Access Team (EMAT). It is headed by Helen Mellor, who has an office at Birch Lane Family centre in Dukinfield.

**Quality First Teaching:** The expression used to describe the ways in which a teacher can meet the needs of many pupils in mainstream classes via well-crafted lessons, appropriate resources, skilful conversation and good classroom organisation.

**Hearing impaired learners:** 'Hearing Impairment' is a generic term used to describe all hearing loss. Hearing loss, or deafness, is the partial or total inability to hear sound in one or both ears. The two terms most used by trained teachers of the deaf to describe hearing impairment are the **type** and **degree** of loss e.g. Profound Sensori-Neural Loss. There is an important difference between people who are pre-lingually deaf, that is becoming deaf before learning to speak, and those who become deaf later in life. Some learners may also have difficulty acquiring language depending on the nature of their loss.

**Visually impaired learners:** Many people have some type of visual problem at some point in their lives. Some can no longer see objects far away. Others have problems reading small print. These types of conditions are often easily treated with eyeglasses or contact lenses. But when one or more parts of the eye or brain that are needed to process images become diseased or damaged, severe or total loss of vision can occur. In these cases, vision can't be fully restored with medical treatment, surgery, or corrective lenses like glasses or contacts.

**Bilingual learners:** Describes pupils who, because of their situation, need to use more than one language. They may or may not be fluent in all the languages they need to use. Some bilingual pupils will need special consideration; some are well-accommodated within Quality First Teaching. The needs of bilingual learners

who have social fluency are sometimes less apparent, which can lead to underachievement.

**Autistic Spectrum Disorder (also called 'Autistic Spectrum Condition')** Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them.

**Specific Learning Difficulties (dyslexia):** Dyslexia is a severe and persistent learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia.

**Emotional, Social and Mental Health Issues:** 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. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.

**The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) code of Practice:** a legal framework which details how learners with Special Needs should be assessed and how provision should be managed.

**The OFSTED Framework for School Inspection:** A set of criteria which OFSTED use to form judgements during inspections.

**High Level Teaching Assistant:** A teaching assistant qualified to a high level, who will therefore be expected to take on more responsibilities and work more independently than other Teaching Assistants.

**Special Support Assistant:** Someone who works closely with pupils who have special needs.



**Outreach Staff and Advisory Teachers:** Practitioners from support teams who will visit schools to work with teachers or pupils under particular circumstances for a specified length of time. Some staff may also be involved in sharing advice or providing training.

**Buddy:** A pupil who has agreed to help one or more other pupils in a defined way (eg to help a new pupil to settle in, to help a classmate access ICT). This kind of arrangement works best when expectations are clearly established and the care a pupil gives is formally recognised.

**Peer Mediator:** A pupil who is able to help others in making decisions, acting as a go-between.

**Lead learner or Peer Mentor:** A pupil who is able to offer support, modelling learning skills.

**Multimodal Learning:** A term with several meanings, all connected to having multiple ways of accessing, sharing and storing information. It is related to notions about learning styles, and also to educating learners about media. In some contexts, it is about understanding how the ways in which information is displayed can impact upon meaning (eg how a picture can add to a text). Multimodal learning is particularly connected to use of ICT to find and present information.

**Multisensory Learning:** Activities which involve more than one sense. Most classrooms are very visual places, but including activities in which pupils see, hear, touch and even taste or smell can raise attainment.

**Collaborative Learning:** A style of group work which involves moving information from one medium to another and passing information from one person to another. It supports language for learning in many subject areas.

**Kagan:** A style of group work in which pupils have clear roles and work in an established structure. It is designed to raise achievement and to promote social skills.

**Graphic organisers:** Visual ways of storing, organising or displaying information, such as time lines, Venn diagrams, cause and effect chains, flow charts and results tables. As well as being handy as a memory aid, if they are used well,

graphic organisers support comprehension and production of language in different subject areas.

**Tell me and I forget.**

**Teach me and I remember.**

**Involve me and I learn.**

*Benjamin Franklin*