

SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS

UNIT 18

ASSESSMENT, MONITORING PROGRESS AND INTERVENTIONS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Teachers will:

- Understand the importance of high expectations about the progress that pupils with SLCN will make
- Know how to make a baseline assessment of the attainment of pupils with SLCN
- Know how to set targets and measure the progress of pupils with SLCN
- Understand the purpose of small group interventions
- Evaluate a range of small group interventions suitable for pupils with SLCN
- Make a case for a small group intervention for a group of pupils with SLCN, and
- Evaluate the success of a small group intervention for a group of pupils with SLCN.

ONLINE RESOURCES

The content and tasks throughout these PDFs are supported by online resources that are designed to facilitate and supplement your training experience.

Links to these are signposted where appropriate. The resources use graphics and interactive elements to:

- Highlight salient points
- Provide at-a-glance content summaries
- Introduce further points of interest
- Offer visual context
- Break down and clearly present the different stages and elements of processes, tasks, practices, and theories

The online resources offer great benefits, both for concurrent use alongside the PDFs, or as post-reading revision and planning aids.

Please note that the resources cannot be used in isolation without referencing the PDFs. Their purpose is to complement and support your training process, rather than lead it.

You should complete any learning or teaching tasks and additional reading detailed in this PDF to make full use of the Advanced training materials for autism; dyslexia; speech, language and communication; emotional, social and behavioural difficulties; moderate learning difficulties.

To find out more about the resources, how they work, and how they can enhance your training, visit the homepage at: www.education.gov.uk/lamb

The first resource for this unit can be found here:
www.education.gov.uk/lamb/slc/assessment-monitoring/intro

BRIEFING 1 – ASSESSMENT AND PROGRESSION

It is important that teachers have high expectations of pupils with SLCN and that such pupils make progress. In order to do achieve this, teachers must:

- anticipate and remove or minimise barriers for learners for pupils with SLCN
- ensure that the necessary provision is made for pupils with SLCN, and
- know when a pupil is making good progress.

Ofsted¹ is clear about the importance of expectations in improving progress and outcomes:

Expectations of the success that pupils with SEN can have remain at the heart of the matter. Many of those in mainstream schools could do better, provided that the curriculum, teaching and other support were better adapted to their needs and greater rigour was applied to setting and pursuing targets for achievement. Until more is expected from the lowest-attaining pupils, improvement in provision for pupils with SEN and in the standards they reach will continue to be slow.

The Progression Guidance² stressed the importance of knowing what good progress looks like for pupils with SEN:

To set high expectations we need to know what good progress looks like for learners on a range of different trajectories. We need to be able to recognise the progress of learners who are working just below age-related expectations at each key stage and those working at the lower P levels throughout their school career. For younger children and at earlier levels, in particular, progress may be slower and, for a planned period of time, involve consolidation and generalisation of newly acquired skills within a single level. This is sometimes described as horizontal or lateral progress. However, the data indicates that at every key stage and every P level, the majority of pupils progress to the next level. For some children, and at some stages, for example children with a life-limiting condition during a period of deterioration, preventing or slowing a decline in performance may be an appropriate outcome. In every case the school needs the evidence to support this

¹ Ofsted (2004) SEN and disability: towards inclusive schools

² The Progression Guidance, 2009-10, DCSF

judgement. We need to ensure that we do not compromise our expectations of the progress of any learner.

Accurate assessment is essential to securing and measuring pupils' progress.

The purposes of assessment include:

- Informing teaching and learning
- Enabling progress to be tracked accurately
- Identifying where further intervention is required
- Adjusting provision
- Review targets, and
- Informing pupils about their progress, what they need to do to improve and how to get there.

In order for assessment to be effective, teachers must be able to make well-founded judgements about pupils' attainment and use those judgements to plan ahead. Reliable judgements are based on a shared understanding of the range of evidence on which a judgement should be based. As a teacher with advanced and specialist skills in teaching pupils with SLCN, you will be involved in working with colleagues to assess the attainment and progress of pupils with SLCN. The professional discussion with colleagues that supports assessment and review of progress is another opportunity to discuss improvements in teaching and learning for pupils with SLCN through exchanging information about practice and approaches that have promoted pupils' learning.

Pupils' prior attainment is the starting point for developing high expectations and for setting challenging targets. Prior attainment reflects both the learning difficulties that pupils have and how well they have been taught to date.

Task 1

Meet with the SENCO and/or assessment co-ordinator. Look at the school's progress and attainment data on a sample of pupils with SLCN.

Consider the following questions:

1. How many levels of progress are pupils with SLCN making?
2. Make a judgement on whether these levels of progress are inadequate, satisfactory, good or outstanding. You will need to refer to the progression guidance materials to make this judgement.

Look at any targets set for the sample of pupils with SLCN. On the basis of their current rates of progress do you feel these targets are aspirational?

There are a variety of ways to monitor the progress of pupils with SLCN, including:

- By reviewing the profiles you have compiled and noting any changes in that profile
- Using evidence from pupils themselves
- Through lesson observations
- Reviewing pupil progress data, and
- Teachers' evaluations of participation and progress in lessons.

TASK 2 – MEASURING PROGRESS

You may find it helpful to work closely with the SENCO on this task.

Identify the progress-monitoring systems used in your school and evaluate their effectiveness.

Consider how you could use these and/or other systems to support colleagues to monitor the progress of pupils with SLCN.

How would the pupil you profiled previously fit into these frameworks?

BRIEFING 2 – SMALL GROUP INTERVENTIONS

Quality first teaching, discussed previously, will enable many pupils with SLCN to make good progress. Analysis of progress data, as discussed in Briefing 1, above, will identify pupils who are falling below age-related expectations developmentally or academically.

Where pupils are still experiencing difficulties despite high quality first teaching, schools might consider using small group interventions. These interventions are designed for pupils with the potential to 'catch up' and reach age-related norms in one or more aspects of speech, language and communication by the end of the programme delivery, e.g. those with speech and language delay.

Some of the most widely used small group interventions for pupils with SLCN (excluding autism) are shown in Fig.1³. The chart does not cover all interventions. There are many locally developed programmes, e.g. Blackburn and Darwen's *Vocabulary Box* and the University of York's *Language4Reading*, that have been evaluated rigorously but are not yet available to schools outside the project/area.

³ From Gross, J. , 'Plugging the gap', Special, nasen, March 2011

Those that have been shown to have an impact through published evaluation using pre- and post-intervention measures are asterisked.

Fig.1

Early Years	Key stages 1 and 2	Secondary
<p><i>Boosting Language, Auditory Skills and Talking (BLAST)*</i> www.blastprogramme.co.uk A small group programme designed to enhance and enrich the speech, language and communication skills of three to four year olds</p>		
<p><i>Nursery narrative*</i> (Black Sheep Press) Activities to develop listening and expressive language through a narrative framework of 'who', 'where', 'when' and 'what happened next'. Nursery and Reception.</p>	<p><i>Key Stage 1 Narrative, Key Stage 2 Narrative*</i> (Black Sheep Press) Activities that use a narrative framework to improve expressive language, attention and listening, and storywriting skills.</p>	<p><i>Enhancing Language and Communication In Secondary Schools (ELCISS)*</i> www.elciss.com and Speechmark) Small group interventions to develop vocabulary and narrative skills.</p>
<p><i>Developing baseline communication skills</i> (Speechmark) Targets listening, comprehension, expression and social interaction. For pupils aged four to five years.</p>	<p><i>Speaking, listening and understanding</i> (Speechmark) Targets a range of language functions such as following instructions, narrating, describing, explaining and predicting. For years 1 and 2.</p>	<p><i>Secondary Talk*</i> (Bolton Council) A ten-week speaking and listening intervention programme based on the Talking Partners approach and covering a similar range of language functions.</p>
	<p><i>Understanding and using spoken language</i> (Speechmark) Targets active listening and memory, thinking and reasoning, and using language effectively. For years 3 and 4.</p>	
<p><i>Languageland</i></p>		

<p>(Black Sheep Press) Activities that target listening, sound awareness, vocabulary, comprehension and narrative skills Nursery, Reception and key stage 1.</p>	
<p><i>One Step at a Time</i> (Network Continuum Education) A structured programme for the systematic teaching of spoken language skills for pupils aged three to seven. Based on four types of spoken language skill: conversation (Nursery); listening (Reception); narrative (Year 1); and discussion (Year 2).</p>	
<p><i>Language for Thinking*</i> (Speechmark) Provides a clear structure to help pupils' language develop from the 'here and now' to the 'how and why'. Suitable for pupils in key stage 1 and older pupils with SEN.</p>	
<p><i>Spirals</i> (Routledge) A structured approach based on small group circle times. Develops attention, language, thinking and social communication skills. Nursery through to early primary years.</p>	
<p><i>Time To Talk</i> (LDA) A 40-session programme to develop oral and social interaction skills. Reception and key stage 1.</p>	
<p><i>Talking Partners*</i> (Education Bradford) A structured ten-week programme that targets a range of language functions. Links closely to classroom literacy learning. Foundation stage to key stage 2.</p>	
	<p><i>Nurturing Talk</i> (Education Bradford) Based on the Talking Partners programme and linked closely to the SEAL materials. Develops speaking and listening skills in both a social and an academic context. Key stages 1 to 3.</p>
	<p><i>Talking Maths</i> (Liverpool Local Authority) Develops speaking and listening skills in the context of the language of mathematics. Years 1 to 7.</p>

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Speech and language teams in local authorities may have particular intervention programmes for which they provide training, modelling and ongoing support. It might be best to start with these packages unless the staff delivering the interventions in your school are highly qualified in SCLN and can adapt off-the-peg schemes with little specialist support.

There is evidence that small group interventions can be very successful. For example⁴:

- In Stoke-On-Trent training is provided on the *One Step at a Time* programme and links in to a system for accrediting practitioners' skills at four levels of expertise. Pupils in nursery and Reception classes have their language skills assessed and are identified as at 'green', 'amber' or 'red' according to the results. All pupils take part in core elements of the programme. Pupils at 'amber' have a small group session twice a week, tailored to their needs. Pupils at 'red' take part in daily group sessions. Reassessment following intervention has shown significant gains for all groups of children.
- In Bolton, the inclusion advisory teaching service provides training on the locally developed *Secondary Talk* programme, which consists of a weekly one-hour group session and one or two follow-up sessions to consolidate the taught skills. Visual frameworks are used to help pupils formulate ideas and structure their talk. Evaluation of the pilot showed substantial gains on language assessments – on average, six months gain over ten weeks of intervention.
- In an evaluation of the BLAST programme, pupils made, on average, nine months gain in six weeks on Sure Start language measures and the Reynell test. One year later, this progress had been maintained.
- Primary narrative programmes have shown expressive language increases of 14 months in a six-month period and led to a reduction in speech and language referrals.

See online resource:

www.education.gov.uk/lamb/slc/assessment-monitoring/small-group

Small group interventions will only be successful if they are used with the right group of pupils. Assessment materials within the programmes themselves can help staff who are likely to benefit from the intervention. Pupils with SLCN who are assessed as unlikely to 'catch up' with age-related norms are unlikely to benefit from a small group intervention and will require an approach more tailored to their needs.

⁴ From Gross, J. , 'Plugging the gap', Special, nasen, March 2011

TASK 3 – RESEARCHING SMALL GROUP INTERVENTION

Talk to the SENCO to find out what, if any, small group interventions around speech, language and communication are already in place in school. Where these exist, find out:

- How pupils were selected,
- Who delivers the interventions and how they were trained,
- How the interventions are evaluated, and
- What progress pupils are making/have made.

Research the range of available small group interventions. You might use the list above or talk to your local authority specialist service, if there is one, or to a speech and language therapist. You will need to look carefully at:

- The suitability of the interventions for particular groups of pupils
- Evidence that the intervention has been trialled and assessed rigorously
- Evidence of success of the intervention in terms of pupils' progress, and
- Evidence the longer-term sustainability of any gains that pupils' make after the intervention has stopped.

You will need to consider the rate of progress you expect pupils to achieve through the intervention. Boosting a pupil's rate of progress to the 'normal' rate, though it would mean they are not falling any further behind, will still leave the pupil well below average, and not actually catching up. Ideally, you should aim for pupils who have fallen behind to reach the target level for their age rather than just narrowing the gap between them and their peers.

TASK 4 – MAKING A CASE FOR SMALL GROUP INTERVENTIONS

From your review of pupil progress data, identify a group of pupils that might benefit from a particular small group intervention. Make a case for this and discuss it with the SENCO. You, through the SENCO, may need to make a case for the intervention to the senior leadership team (SLT), as there will be significant resource implications. Consideration of the following should help you make your case:

- Set-up costs
- Training of the teachers, TAs or others who will deliver the intervention and ongoing support for them
- Resources to deliver the intervention
- Timetabling of staff and possible cover for them, if the intervention is delivered outside the classroom

See online resource:

www.education.gov.uk/lamb/slc/assessment-monitoring/small-group-considerations

Though some interventions have a high initial cost they can still provide value for money. You will need to make a case for the long-term impact of the intervention and the likely savings in future budgets if the intervention is as successful as you predict.

You will need to have a plan for monitoring pupils progress as a result of the intervention, this should include:

- A baseline pre-test
- Regular monitoring during the intervention, if it is delivered over more than a couple of weeks
- A post intervention test, and
- Longer term monitoring to assess whether the gains pupils make are sustained.

See online resource:

www.education.gov.uk/lamb/slc/assessment-monitoring/small-group-monitoring

TASK 5 – IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING SMALL GROUP INTERVENTIONS

In this task you can evaluate either a small group speech, language or communication intervention that you have introduced, or one which is already delivered regularly in your school. As a teacher with specialist knowledge and skills in teaching pupils with SLCN, you might also be asked to help evaluate small group interventions on other schools. This task should be carried out after discussion with the SENCO and with their full agreement and cooperation. Such interventions should be recorded on the school's provision map (see Briefing 3 below).

See online resource:

www.education.gov.uk/lamb/slc/assessment-monitoring/task-5

Methodology:

- Make sure teachers who teach the pupils involved in the intervention understand its purpose and how they can support the pupils involved to transfer that learning to lessons. You might arrange to observe pupils in the classroom to see if they are using their new knowledge or skills. Providing feedback to the teacher and pupils will help promote and consolidate progress
- Consider when the interventions will be delivered – what will pupils miss if the intervention is delivered outside the classroom. The intervention should not unintentionally constitute a 'punishment' by depriving pupils of break times or lessons that they enjoy, e.g. PE

- Collect a range of relevant baseline data on each pupil that will be involved as they enter the intervention, both qualitative and quantitative data. Pupil progress data will enable you to assess the impact of the intervention in terms of pupils' attainment but qualitative data can demonstrate, for example, changes in pupils' attitudes to learning and their confidence. You might seek advice on particular quantitative tests that might be suitable from your local authority specialist service, if there is one, or to a speech and language therapist. The particular test(s) selected should be related to the focus of the intervention. Further information from teachers, parents and carers and pupils can provide useful qualitative data on confidence levels and the capacity of the pupils involved to make use of their new learning in lessons
- Consider who will deliver the intervention and the training they will need. A key factor in the success or failure of small group interventions is the rigour with which the interventions have been implemented and this will depend on the quality of training that staff are given and the way that the quality of the intervention is monitored. Often, it is teaching assistants who deliver small group interventions. Blatchford et al⁵ and Riggs and Mueller⁶ have expressed concern about the lack of training that teaching assistants receive for important pedagogic roles.
- For interventions that last longer than a term, collect interim data to check whether the programme is effective
- Monitor the programme to check that it is being delivered as intended and support the staff delivering it to maximise its effectiveness. Monitoring pupils' responses to the teaching during the intervention and adjusting the teaching approach to suit the pupil can also lead to better outcomes
- Collect data at the end of the intervention
- Compare the baseline data with the final data set to assess pupils' progress. Be aware that the impact of an intervention may be wider than its original focus, for example, an intervention that aims to improve pupils' ability to follow instructions is also likely to improve their attention and listening skills, and
- Collect data at intervals after the intervention is complete to ensure that the gains made through the intervention are maintained. Long-term monitoring could involve the use of standardised tests but is more likely to rely on pupil progress data.

If after evaluating the intervention you are concerned that pupils have not made the expected progress or that progress has not been sustained you should discuss next steps with the SENCO. It is tempting where an intervention seems to have been

⁵ Blatchford, P., Russell, A., Bassett, P., Brown, P. and Martin, C. (2004). The effects and role of teaching assistants in English primary schools (Years 4 to 6) 2000-2003. Results from the class size and pupil-adult ratios (CSPAR) project. Research Report 605, London: Department for Education and Skills

⁶ Riggs, C. G. and Mueller, P. H. (2001). Employment and utilization of paraeducators in inclusive settings. *Journal of Special Education*, 35, 54–62

unsuccessful to give it more time or to try a different intervention. Decisions should be made only after careful consideration of the possible reasons for the lack of success. Where a pupil appears to have persistent needs despite the use of well-founded small group interventions, it is essential to seek advice and support from professionals with specialist knowledge.