One great thing about being a SENCO

“Being a support to colleagues – even when you don’t have all the answers”

“Feeling like a specialist”

“Supporting pupils and their families – ‘championing’ their cause”

“The opportunity to have positive influence on the lives of young people with SEN”

“We learn so much from and work with such amazing staff and pupils”

“Having the opportunity to be the voice for children and challenge colleagues in their inclusive practice”

“Seeing children, regardless of their needs, flourish”

“Being a champion for children when they need it the most”
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Welcome to this booklet of SENCO research

We have included examples from the ‘nasen live 2019’ display of the small-scale action research projects carried out by SENCOs and aspiring SENCOs for their National Award for SEN Co-ordination coursework. These are all aimed to improve the support they provided and increase attainment for students with SEND in their schools.

We hope that you enjoy reading about how small-scale research can make a real difference for young people with SEND and that these provide you with ideas of ways in which to collect evidence about the impact of interventions and further develop school practice.

Gill Richards
Emeritus Professor of Special Education, Equity and Inclusion, Nottingham Trent University

Michele Taylor
Subject Administrator, Nottingham Institute of Education
Abstract  Staff confidence levels in providing effective inclusive practice for pupils with SEN were investigated using a quantitative methodology. Data collection was by questionnaire and questions predominantly required a rating scale response, permitting a flexible response and quantitative analysis. It was found the majority of teachers reported high levels of confidence in meeting diverse needs but a majority also reported beliefs that did not value learner diversity or demonstrate high expectation for all learners. Responses on the adequacy of training and awareness of school policy predominantly required a rating scale response, permitting a flexible response and quantitative analysis. It was found the majority of teachers reported high levels of confidence in meeting diverse needs in teaching.

Introduction
Attitudes, knowledge and understanding of teaching staff play a key role in teachers realising the ideal of inclusion (Kurniawati et al. 2016: 267). The Department for Education and Department of Health Code of Practice (DfE / DoH 2015) highlights the need to create high quality provision for pupils with SEN. However, teaching mixed-ability classes with a broad range of need and finding effective ways of accommodating pupils’ individual differences can be challenging for teachers (Yuen et al. 2004: 69).

The study setting was an urban primary school in a Multi-Academy Trust with 318 on roll; 44 pupils (13.8%) meet the threshold for SEN, similar to the national average of 14.6% (DfE 2016: 287). Of 3 of 10 fulltime teaching staff have less than 5 years teaching experience. Historically, TAs supported pupils with SEN.

Observations and planning reviews suggest teachers are not meeting the needs of all children in mixed ability classes. As new Inclusion Coordinator (INCO), it is essential I understand the factors impacting staff capacity to provide high quality inclusive teaching for children with SEN.

Research Strategy
The study evaluated teacher confidence in effective inclusive teaching of pupils with SEN. British Educational Research Association Guidelines (BERA 2011) were followed throughout the research process. Data was collected using a quantitative questionnaire which was distributed to teaching staff and the method of data analysis was numerical.

A key research objective was to establish whether experience, continued professional development (CPD), beliefs and knowledge of inclusive practice impact teacher confidence in providing high quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised (DfE / DoH 2015: 25). It was hypothesised that teachers with less experience and those who considered their training would be less confident in meeting a broad range of need and those who had beliefs that did not reflect inclusive values would claim low confidence in meeting the needs of pupils with SEN.

Procedures & Methods
Verbal approval to conduct research was gained from the Head of School. All teaching staff were asked to participate and it was explained that the study sought to inform school development. Participants were advised of their right to withdraw at any point (BERA 2011). Each questionnaire was provided with a covering letter explaining the purpose of the study and how their responses would be collected. Staff consent was sought as the study went beyond normal school practices. The consent form was collected separately to ensure anonymity.

A quantitative methodology can explain an issue using mathematical analysis (Aliaga & Gunderson 2002 cited in Muñoz 2014: 13). Rating scales permitted quantitative analysis and the fusing of ‘measurement with opinion’ (Cohen et al. 2005: 251). A limited number of dichotomous questions were used to limit respondent bias; Youngman (1984:163 cited in Cohen et al. 2005: 251) states it is ‘a natural human tendency to agree with a statement’. The questionnaire asked teachers to rate their confidence in creating inclusive teaching for pupils with SEN and generated data on how beliefs, knowledge, and training about SEN might impact teacher confidence. The belief statements were taken from the Profile of Inclusive Teachers (EADSN, 2012).

Following Bernard (2006: 270), teachers were asked to provide examples for some statements they had rated. Data was also collected on gender, age and teaching experience as such factors may affect teacher confidence in meeting diverse needs.

9 of 12 teachers (2 part time) returned completed questionnaires.

Analysis of Findings
- 2 / 9 teachers reported no inclusion CPD; both are amongst the least experienced teachers with less than 10 years in role. When questioned about teacher responsibility for CPD, one reported neutrally.
- All respondents reported a positive response to working collaboratively, agreeing that this was required in inclusive education, and were open to and proactive in working with colleagues and professionals.
- On differentiation, teachers reported using a variety of strategies frequently. Staff listed strategies not in the questionnaire. All teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they demonstrated flexibility in teaching strategies. An inexperienced teacher stated that ‘there rarely used more frequent contact with parents as a strategy; they agreed parents are an essential resource for learning but felt neutral about their effectiveness in engaging parents.’
- A majority reported knowledge of local and school policy. 1 was unsure of any policy documents (a teacher with under 2 years experience lacking experience).
- A significant minority do not value diversity; 4 / 9 reported neutrality when asked if learner diversity enhanced learning opportunities and 4 / 9 agreed that learner diversity is a resource that enhances learning opportunities while 4 reported neutrality. Responses about the impact of labelling were mixed; 1 / 9 disagreed that labelling learners impacts negatively on learning opportunities, 5 were neutral, 3 agreed.
- All respondents were either neutral or disagreed that there were few specialist techniques when teaching children with SEN. All rated emotional learning as more important than academic learning for pupils with SEN. 8 agreed or strongly agreed that parents are an essential resource for learning. The response to confidence in developing, implementing and reviewing Individual Education Plans was mixed; 3 agreed they were confident, 5 reported neutrality and 1 lacked confidence.

All these statements link to high expectations of all learners (EADSN, 2016).

8 / 9 staff indicated confidence in meeting changes in inclusive practice and 8 meeting diverse needs; 1 reported neutrality when responding to changes in practice and reported low confidence in meeting need (this respondent also reported not receiving CPD). Hence, it may be that lack of training has negatively impacted confidence. 2 respondents who reported neutrality to confidence in meeting need reported at least story CPD; 1, however, stated under 2 years teaching experience. It could be argued that ITT may have not adequately prepared them for the challenges.

Conclusions
- Findings suggest confidence levels are high but the values that underpin inclusive practice are not consistently demonstrated in teacher responses.
- Accordingly, I will evaluate whether staff who report confidence are actually demonstrating this practice in the classroom. It is easier to identify inclusive practices and methods than to implement them (Rose 2001:147 cited in Yuen et al., 2004: 68). It is also intended to implement a mentoring and training programme to develop ‘shared understandings and philosophies’ (Rose, 2003 cited in Winwood 2012: 9) for all staff.

References
What impact does ‘Circle of Friends’ have on some of the most vulnerable pupils with SEN in Key Stage Three?

**Context**
The school is a small mixed 11-18 academy that is located in a market town. The majority of the students come from the local estate, which has a low chance of social mobility according to a report published in 2017 by the Social Mobility Commission. There is a strong pastoral system at the school to support pupils and enabled them to succeed. However, there is a high proportion of behaviour and attendance issues that are linked to pupils with SEN at the school. There is also evidence that these pupils are not making expected progress. 13.4% of pupils at the school are on the SEN register which is lower than the national average of 14.4%. When breaking down the register by broad area of need, there is a clear over representation of one specific group: 33.3% of pupils on the register are in the Social, Emotional and Mental Health category, which far exceeds the national average of 16.3%. There is specific provision for the most vulnerable learners in the school which is known as the Foundation Learning Group.

**‘Circle of Friends’**
The Circle of Friends approach works by developing a support network around individuals in the school community who are experiencing social difficulties often due to a specific disability, difference or behaviour. The intervention took place once a week for an hour per session with a group of seven students in Year 9 Foundation Learning.

**Methods**
- Baseline data collection on behaviour using Class Charts
- Pupil Questionnaires before and after
- Observational reports and comments by facilitators of the intervention and members of staff around the school.

**Ethics**
Voluntary informed consent was gained through clear communication of why, necessity, usage and reporting.
Consent was also gained for participation in the intervention itself and information was sent out to parents.

**Findings**
- The ratio of positive to negative behaviour points increases during and immediately after the Circle of Friends Intervention for the pupils that are the centre of the circle.
- The ratio then drops when the pupil is no longer at the centre.
- Increase in social interactions between pupil with selective mutism and the rest of the group.
- Increase in participation of pupil with selective mutism in class discussions.
- Increase in points for positive contributions for pupil with SEBD.

**Recommended Reading:**

**Recommendations**
- Make the time that the pupil is at the centre of the circle longer
- Train other staff members (pastoral team and LSAs) to deliver Circle of Friends so that it can be used more widely across the school.
- Involve more pupils in the initial meeting so that a more significant team of peers can be built up that don’t just involve other pupils with SEN.
Recommendations

- After further data analysis, to develop the use of Lego Therapy as an intervention programme for pupils who have, or show signs of, social and emotional needs.
- Yearly Action Research projects to develop our school knowledge.
- Ensure pupils have the language to describe the bricks. Further staff training in Lego Therapy.
Does the use of learning mentors and key adults aid learning in school?

Rob Maddams

The Study
The purpose of the study was to find if 1:1 learning mentors with specific children with SEN is aiding their learning. The aiding of learning takes two forms:
1. The actual numeric progress and attainment the children are achieving.
2. The emotional wellbeing of the child and how they are managing their day to day emotions in school.

The Key Findings
1. Learning mentors are providing an invaluable service in school to the most vulnerable children. Hard to measure emotions such as wellbeing are greatly improved.
2. Learning mentors are helping children spend more time in class actually learning and completing tasks.
3. The relationships built up between learning mentors and pupils is hugely beneficial.
4. Actually numerical progress was not improved and in certain cases children had regressed.

The Recommendations
1. Learning mentors used more widely across school to improve the wellbeing of a greater number of children not just the few they are working with.
2. Create a specific nurture group and use the skills of the qualified ELSA across school for the emotional wellbeing of children.
3. Move away from a 1:1 learning mentor structure to allow children to gain more independence.

Data
- Data collected by the use of questionnaires, interviews and research across school.
- The views of school staff, parents/carers and children have all been sought as part of this study.

Reading:
- NASH, P. & SCHLOSSER, A., 2015, ‘Working with schools in identifying and overcoming emotional barriers to learning’

'I love working with Mrs. She always makes everything so clear and I know she cares for me and looks out for me.’ (Child B)

'I know Mrs will work with me even when I’m not being very nice. She will always be there for me.' (Child A)

'Is Mrs. Working with child B next year? It is all down to her the turnaround he has made this year. (Parent)
How can we, as a school, build on developing good practice to improve phase transitions between KS1 and KS2 for children with SEND?

Context

⇒ Significant numbers of children are identified with social communication and language differences throughout the school and transition times can be particularly challenging for this group of children
⇒ Emotional wellbeing at age 7 is a significant predictor of higher academic progression from KS1 to KS2 (Gutman and Vorhaus 2012)
⇒ Historically children transitioning from KS1 to KS2 had found the emotional upheaval challenging
⇒ This project focused specifically on the transition of children from KS1 to KS2, particularly on those who had been identified as having an SEMH need or requiring additional support in this area.
⇒ 15 children were selected from a year group of 60. 1 had an EHCP, 4 children were on the school’s SEND register and the remaining children were being monitored.

Method

This practitioner research project involved:

⇒ Parent questionnaires
⇒ Child led intervention and person-centred reviewing of the project supported by an ELSA including a 6 week programme of small group activities and discussions supported by weekly visits to new class with the whole cohort; targeted focus to class visits (in conjunction with the new class teacher) to answer questions and concerns raised by the children; bespoke programme and group size dependent on the needs of each child.
⇒ Observations and unstructured interviews

Ethical approach

⇒ I abided by BERA guidelines 2018
⇒ All participants in the research gave voluntary informed consent
⇒ Permission was gained for use of photos

Conclusion

Based on this practitioner research:

⇒ Child led transition planning has had a positive impact on transition for this cohort of children.
⇒ Regular familiarisation and an understanding of each child’s worries and questions in the late Summer Term of Y2 has had a positive impact on their experiences of the early part of Y3. Building in earlier opportunities for shared planning of transition processes, between phases and teams, had a positive impact on transition practices between Y2 and Y3.
⇒ There is still some work to do regarding the swift transition of written information and records for children with SEND

Findings

⇒ Children in this cohort had anxieties and unanswered questions that we would not have predicted.
⇒ Staff recognised that by listening to the children’s concerns and questions and planning accordingly, not making general assumptions about the needs of the children, planning and outcomes were more effective.
⇒ The parents of this cohort of children all had concerns and anxieties about their child’s transition from Y2 to Y3 before the project.

"I don’t know what you did with him but this is the best September we’ve had. He’s so happy and he’s settled down so quickly and I don’t think there’s been any bother with him…. He’s been really happy about coming into school" Parent of child

Further Reading

Fisher J, Moving on to Key Stage 1. (Open University Press 2010)
Gatton M, Gray J, Rudduck J, The impact of school transitions and transfers on pupil progress and attainment (DfEE 1999)
How effective are one page profiles in improving teachers’ confidence in raising achievement of year 7 students with SEND?

By Jessica Warren

Context
The aim of this study was to see if the introduction of one page profiles increased teacher confidence in teaching students with SEND. There had been mixed transition information from primary schools and often consist of class teacher views and SATS results and very little student voice. NASEN recommends a person centered approach to fit in with the SEN code of practice which the use of one page profiles would support. The school in which this took place is an academy and is in an area of high deprivation. It has 459 students on roll. The proportion of students on the SEND register is higher than the national average at 22%.

Ethics
➢ Written informed consent from parents/ carers.
➢ Names and sensitive information kept confidential.
➢ Right to withdraw information given to students and parents.
➢ Documents held in secure online drive.
➢ Staff gave full written informed consent to the questionnaire.
➢ Researcher contact details provided for those wishing to withdraw data.

Baseline Questionnaire
What: used a Likert scale questionnaire with 10 questions
How: These consisted of ten statements that staff could indicate how much they agreed/ disagreed on a scale.
Why: This method enabled me to collate and quantify teacher of year 7’s views on teaching students with SEND in year 7, including the information they received and how confident they felt.

One page profile
What: Created one page profiles containing information such as student’s views on what helps the best, their good qualities and what a good day at school would look like.
How: One to one interviews were conducted with students in year 7 with SEND whose parents had given consent. These were distributed to all teachers of year 7.
Why: This was to enable teachers to gain more information on those students new to the school with SEND. It provided student voice through personalized profile with students choosing images and colours.

Questionnaires and interviews
What: The same Likert Scale questionnaire was given to staff and interviews conducted with members of staff new to the school this year.
How: The same ten statements were given to teachers once again and face to face structured interviews.
Why: This method enabled me to compare the scores from before and after the introduction of the one page profile.

Findings
• A higher score on the questionnaire indicated increased confidence and good information sharing. The mean score before the one page profiles was 35.4 and after increased to 37.5.
• Confidence in strategies to use with students with SEND increased after the one page profiles.
• Confidence in teaching student in year 7 overall did not improve after the introduction.
• Teacher views on the importance of student voice also altered after the introduction of the profiles, from five agreeing to seven.

Recommendations
✓ Implement one page profiles for all students transitioning from primary school
✓ Centralised folder for all one page profiles for staff permanent and temporary to access
✓ Whole school focus to student voice
✓ More support and discussion for the role of teaching assistants as their importance was mentioned by participants

Amount of grades increased by at least one sublevel out of 15 subjects

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<th>Student with profile</th>
<th>Amount of grades increased</th>
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How can a secondary SEN Department facilitate effective appraisal target setting for support staff, without duplicating the work of subject teachers?

Support Staff Appraisal Targets set using the following themes: Curriculum Access, Enrichment, Social and Emotional Well-Being, Homework

Efficacy of this target setting approach was evaluated through a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, including interviews with staff and students, and tracking of data in relevant areas.

Findings on efficacy of target setting from the above themes:
Positive
• Targets relevant to the work of support staff
• Targets relevant to students
• Resulting work seems to impact positively on attendance
Further Development Needed
• Less than desired impact on academic attainment
• Difficult to evidence direct link to impact on whole-school outcomes

Recommendations:
• It is important to ensure target setting is relevant, meaningful and achievable for staff and students
• The identified themes have an important place in the work of Support Staff
• Academic focus needs to be retained through rigorous interventions
How does a Growth Mindset Impact Children with Additional Needs in a Primary Setting.

Context: 18% of children with Special Needs reached the expected level in reading, writing and maths in 2017 compared with 70% of their peers without SEN.

I wanted to find out if children with SEN could improve their progress and attainment through a change in their mindset around their perceived capabilities.

Ethics: Complying with BERA guidelines:
- Children competent to give own consent
- Children had the option to withdraw at any time.
- Communicated intentions to Parents and sought consent.
- Research documents held securely on pen drive.
- Names anonymised.
- Consent for verbal evidence during research.
- All involved informed that the project would be for public viewing.

Findings:
- After the intervention, there was an increase in the group’s feelings about school, perceived learning capability, general work ethic, confidence in learning, attitudes to attendance and response to curriculum demands.
- There was no increase in the groups self regard as learner or their attitude towards teachers.
- Teaching staff saw an improvement in positivity towards learning.
- Children developed a more positive attitude towards making mistakes and were more inclined to take risks as a result.
- There was an increase in the use of growth mindset language by adults and children.

Method:
- Research into growth mindset focusing on the work of Carol Dweck
- SEN Meeting with Parents and teacher and child to discuss current mindset.
- Pupil progress meeting with teachers to identify children struggling with mindset
- Use of PASS questionnaire with children to identify starting points
- Mindset sessions twice a week with 9 children with SEN working on growth mindset strategies.
- My Marvellous Mind week for whole school working on Growth Mindset with staff and children.

Two Mindsets

Recommendations
- Develop the Growth Mindset philosophy across school with focus on the start of the year.
- Create growth mindset displays
- Encourage use of growth mindset language consistently across school.
- Working party looking at differentiation and allowing appropriate and real challenge for children with SEN.
- Use PASS questionnaire more widely across school to highlight areas of focus.
- Include growth mindset strategies in pupil provision maps and in pupil progress meetings.
- Introduce certificates for growth mindset and marvellous mistakes.

I can’t do it...yet!
I can’t do it!
I made a marvellous mistake!
I like knowing that everyone has a challenge. We just have different ways of beating them! - Year 4 child
My child has changed their attitude to learning. They are not scared anymore knowing they can get things wrong. - Parent of Year 6 child

Recommended Reads/Websites
Mindset- Carol Dweck
The Growth Mindset Coach-A Brock and H Hundley
How to develop growth mindsets in the classroom- M. Gershwin
www.growthmindset.org

Natalie Aldridge- N0777477
How effective is the provision at school at meeting the needs of children who show signs of dyslexia from the perspective of both staff and children?

Background and Context
Dyslexia is a hidden disability that affects 10% of the population. 8% of pupils in Key Stage 2 have been identified as having signs of dyslexia through the GL Dyslexia Screener. Dyslexia is not only thought of as a weakness in literacy skills but information processing, memory difficulties, speed of processing, organisation and sequencing skills.

Suggested Reading
BERA, 2018. Ethical guidelines for educational research.
Rose, J., 2009. Identifying and teaching children and young people with dyslexia and literacy difficulties.

Method:
I adopted a mixed method research design using quantitative and qualitative data.

23 staff questionnaires prior to staff training.
1 pupil interview prior to staff training.

Development and delivery of staff training session on dyslexic support strategies by the Learning Support Team.

23 staff questionnaires post staff training.
1 pupil interview post staff training.

Staff Questionnaire Quantitative Data

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1: I am confident in identifying children who display dyslexic tendencies in my class.</th>
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<th>Question 2: I know a range of strategies I can implement to support child with signs of dyslexia within reading.</th>
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Pupil Interview Qualitative Data

Prior staff training:
It takes me a long time to do my writing. I need to speed up.
Sometimes Mrs A sits with me and helps me.

Post staff training:
I have a special coloured ruler that helps me not lose my place and see the words better its blue. My sheet has bigger spaces now that helps. I sometimes read aloud to my friend or Mrs A.

Findings and Recommendations:
From the questionnaire two key themes were identified. The first being that staff needed training on the identification of children with dyslexic tendencies and this meant looking at the types of barriers they may face in their learning. The second was staff’s use and knowledge of a range of strategies and resources to support learners. Both of these themes where addressed in the training session on dyslexic support strategies by the Learning Support Team. Staff confidence rose substantially in the post questionnaire and this was also reflected in the experience of the pupil. Therefore increasing the effectiveness of the provision provided to a good standard.

Next Steps:
- Continued staff CPD
- Peer to peer support for staff through observations of good practice and sharing of best practice
- Learning walks focusing on the embedding of a dyslexia friendly environment throughout the school.
Introduction

The study setting is a primary school in a deprived area where 18% of children have SEN compared to 14.6% nationally (DfE, 2018). An Ofsted inspection identified that SEN-designated pupils were over-reliant on adult support and making insufficient progress in literacy. A barrier to learning for some is the level of dexterity required by devices other than iPads and traditional pen or pencil, leading to disengagement. Kucirkova (2014) found that iPads and apps can positively impact children’s motivation and learning. The British Educational Communications & Technology Agency (2003) summarised the benefits of using Information and Communications Technology (ICT) as: allowing greater independence in learners; enabling learners to communicate more effectively; and empowering them to demonstrate learning in ways not possible using traditional methods. The Royal Society (2011) has stated that mainstream classes cannot adequately support learners with particular learning difficulties as the level of attention required for each individual learner is unaffordable. Technology provides additional support to that of the teacher through targeted learning interventions which can be adapted to suit the learner’s needs and support self-motivating learning. Reading Doctor gives instant feedback to the learners’ actions which is difficult to match in a challenging classroom setting. A trial was organised to establish whether daily intervention using a ‘Reading Doctor’ app for iPads could improve a pupil’s reading skills. The principal objectives were:

▪ To investigate whether Reading Doctor was an effective tool to support the teaching of reading and synthetic phonics, enabling measured progress

▪ To explore whether Reading Doctor would motivate and engage a pupil diagnosed with moderate learning difficulties

▪ To ascertain whether Reading Doctor was effective in promoting independent learning

Procedures & Methods

A mixed methods strategy generated qualitative and quantitative data:

▪ The pupil completed an open-ended qualitative pre / post-intervention questionnaire, focusing on motivation to learn. It was shared verbally and responses were scribed to ensure access.

▪ The pupil underwent a pre / post-intervention assessment by the setting’s Educational Psychologist to assess phonic ability. Testing offered the teacher immediate, valuable feedback and was tailored to the RD app and participant.

▪ Diaries of observations during the 3-week intervention were kept as they can demonstrate strong ecological validity (Moyle 2002 cited in Cohen et al 2011) and provide rich data, adding validity to findings.

Fig. 1 Knowledge of letter sounds 2 (consonant) pre- and post-intervention

![Pre-Intervention](https://example.com/fig1a.png)

![Post-Intervention](https://example.com/fig1b.png)

Analysis of Findings

Additional sounds were learnt (Fig. 1). 39 letter sounds (57% of the total sounds tested) were recognised pre-RD and 46 (68%) post-RD, an improvement of 11%, contradicting Woodward and Bith’s (2004) argument that instructions given by computer are inadequate for children with SEN.

Observation confirmed that RD enabled independent engagement without direction by an adult but that children with SEN risk exclusion from interaction with other learners (Fiorian 2004). Fernández et al (2009) found when using apps with students with SEN, disruptive behaviours were reduced. My observations mirrored these findings.

The pupil was extremely motivated by the use of iPads, supporting Royal Society (2011) findings that technological interventions can be adapted to suit learner needs and support self-motivating learning and engagement (Fig. 3).

Conclusions

▪ Findings showed that the RD app motivated and engaged the pupil, and supported the development of literacy skills.

▪ Support is still required to aid the learning process. As Clark and Mayer observed: ‘When instructional methods remain essentially the same, so does the learning’ (2011: 14).

▪ ICT can offer personalised directions, but its impact will depend on the learning needs of the pupil and its careful adaptation which remains the responsibility of the teacher.

▪ To overcome the negative impact on social interaction and communication, the app may be adapted so that children work collaboratively.

▪ The results are promising but should be applied cautiously to the SEN population in the setting.

References

Q: Does combining maths interventions with quality first teaching help to increase the academic progress of children with SEN?

Rationale:
Interventions have always been seen as having a positive impact in reading and writing. However, due to ability streaming, maths interventions have almost ceased completely across school. Mastery maths suggests that all children learn from each other and reinforce their learning through repetition and application to various scenarios. Is this enough for those children with SEN to make the same level or accelerated progress through the maths curriculum? Arguably not!

It was hoped that by reintroducing maths interventions across the school with a select group of children, both teachers and pupils would notice an increase in progress and confidence within maths lessons.

Methodology:
After an initial assessment the scores were analysed and a group of children who we hoped would benefit from additional math teaching were selected with the help of the SENCo and the TA’s. These children were then guided through a 10 week intervention program led by a TA. They either took part in STILE interventions, wave 3 (from the old curriculum) or Numicon.

After they completed the 10 week course they were tested again where it was hoped we would see some progress over and above the level of progress of their peers who had not received any additional math tuition.

The children were then interviewed about their experiences during the intervention process, what they thought about taking part and whether they wanted to take part in something similar again.

Findings and Recommendations:
The study found that broadly, yes the interventions made an impact on the results scored by the children in standardised tests. All (bar one) of the children involved was able to score more marks the second time they sat a standardised test than before the interventions were in place. A very positive outcome!

The graph below shows a vast improvement for those children who took part in the intervention programmes when sitting their second tests. The children said that they all enjoyed taking part in the intervention programs and that they would like to do more of them in the future. But what cannot be denied is that being removed from other lessons to take part in the intervention programmes held a stigma especially for the older children within school.

It is hoped that the teachers within the school will view this statistical data as persuasive evidence to include more maths interventions for those children with SEN as a way of increasing their knowledge and confidence within the classroom and importantly within standardised test situations.

However, taking on board the idea of it being isolating for those children to be removed form the classroom for this to take place we need to ensure that all children share the ethos of this being a good thing and maybe consider taking the time from other areas of the day where their absence would be less noticeable i.e. assembly time. This would hopefully allow all children to take pride in their additional learning and their resulting progress!

Jennifer Miles N0139610
Abstract

Action research assessed the impact of a staff inset (In-Service Training for Teachers) to improve the ‘dyslexia friendliness’ of a primary academy using a pre and post action research strategy. Data was collected through questionnaires completed by teaching staff prior to and following the inset. Findings indicated a positive impact on staff’s understanding and awareness of the indicators of dyslexia and changes were being made to improve the dyslexia friendliness of classroom practice. It was concluded that regular updates are required to ensure that staff knowledge remains current.

Introduction

The research setting was a larger than average primary academy in a deprived urban area with 363 pupils on roll; 22% are on the SEND register against 14.4% nationally (DfE 2017). The school SENCo has recently purchased the Dyslexia Friendly Schools Practice Guide (British Dyslexia Association 2012) following development planning. The guide provides a framework of standards to work towards to achieve the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Schools Mark (DFSM). Work towards the DFSM is a long-term project and the reported action research focussed on a small element given time management constraints.

Pupils identified by class teachers or making inadequate progress in English undergo a screening test involving 14 tasks to complete in a 1:1 situation with a TA. The test identifies pupils as at risk of having dyslexia and provides a profile indicating strengths and weaknesses which can be used to guide pupil-specific support.

Action research is a cyclical, reflective and collaborative process that aims to implement change and inform teaching practice (Koshy 2005).

A pre-action questionnaire explored the strategies teachers use in class to support children with difficulties in English. Using the data collected, I led staff training covering the indicators of dyslexia, introduced the screening test, and provided suggestions to support children with difficulties in English. A post-action questionnaire was completed.

The research objective was to assess the impact of the inset (In-Service Training for Teachers) and the research question was to establish whether inset could improve the ‘dyslexia friendliness’ of the academy.

Procedures & Methods

Cohen et al. (2011) state those working closest to an identified area of development are best positioned to identify the problem and work towards a solution. The screening test had been used with pupils but staff were unaware of its contents and what results it produced. The screening process was planned into the inset to raise awareness and share plans to implement that would support individual pupils. A qualitative questionnaire was distributed to all 15 teaching staff (Foundation to Year 6) and the findings informed the design of the inset. Qualitative research provided an opportunity to explore the staff’s viewpoints (Corbin & Strauss 2015).

Several weeks after the inset a post-questionnaire was used to collect data on staff perceptions of the training and any changes subsequently made. 9 teachers completed and returned the questionnaires. The post-action questionnaires were distributed at a team meeting. The response rate was high as all 12 teaching staff that had attended the meetings returned their questionnaires. BERA (2011) guidelines were adhered to throughout the research.

Analysis of Findings

Pre-action:

- 5/9 staff had received training on dyslexia before but some time ago.
- A majority claimed little understanding / awareness of the indicators of dyslexia despite Rose’s (DCSF 2009) recommendation all teachers have a working knowledge / training to support this.
- Varied teaching strategies used to support literacy difficulties included: visual aids: 4/9, to display or pre-teach vocabulary: 4/9, additional adult support: 3/9.
- Interventions used to support such children included: ‘teo by toe’ (3/9) followed by colourful semantics (2/9) and hold a sentence (2/9).
- No common theme emerged when asked what would be useful to ‘improve the dyslexia friendliness of the school’ / include in the staff inset (Fig. 2).

Post-action:

- All staff’s understanding had improved, highlighting the positive impact of the inset / importance of regular updates.
- Common themes indicated staff are clearer on how to support children using resources / adapting teaching strategies (Fig. 5).
- 11/12 found looking at specific tests within the screening useful.
- A majority felt they could use the profile produced to understand / support individual difficulties.
- 7/12 teaching staff stated that they plan to highlight a child in their class for the screening.

Conclusions

- The inset had a positive impact on practice and the ‘dyslexia friendliness’ of the study setting.
- The majority of participants had made or planned to make changes to improve the ‘dyslexia friendliness’ of their classroom practice and the resources used.
- Research into the effectiveness of each and costs implications before implementation across the academy.
- However, to continue improvements, future cycles of action research are planned to support teaching staff with strategies and interventions specific to children’s needs highlighted in the screening test.
- Regular updates will be organised as staffing changes are made and to ensure knowledge remains current.

References

DCSF (2009) Rose report: Annesley. DCSF.
How effective is Lexia as an intervention for improving attainment and progress in reading for pupils with SEN in Key Stage 2?

Recommendations
The program should be used with pupils who are showing early signs of literacy difficulties in lower year groups. The program is also used at home, with parents who can further cement decoding. Teachers follow the program in its entirety and group pupils of similar stages to make best use of time and support for pupils.

Findings
• 100% of pupils improving reading age and moving book bands.
• 75% made at least 5 months progress in reading age using Salford as the test.
• There was limited impact on the level of comprehension and therefore limited development of holistic reading strategies.
• Teachers revealed that they found it time consuming to go into the program and then plan specific, additional work to further support the pupils in class.

The Method
8 pupils were selected, following the information provided by teachers, to take part in the research project comprising of 4 pupils with SEN, of varying barriers to learning and a further 4 pupils who were working below age-related expectations (A.R.E.). The purpose of this was to analyse the impact of the intervention specifically for pupils with SEN compared with pupils working just below A.R.E.

Rationale
The attainment of pupils with SEN remains significantly below that of their peers in reading with the gap widening as pupils progress through school. Both decoding and comprehension remain low for these pupils.

What is Lexia?
Lexia is a computer-based program that is designed to supplement classroom teaching.

The Study Aims
The aim of the study was to see if Lexia was an appropriate intervention to improve outcomes for pupils with SEN.
• Close the gap between pupils with SEN and their peers.
• Address the needs of pupils earlier in the school to prevent the gap widening.

Suggested Reading

Encourages methods of decoding and blending when approaching unknown words in Guided Reading. Teacher

‘The change has been massive.’ Parent

‘Loves to read now and will bring home books from their current book band and from the one above too.’ Parent

‘I love reading and I actually do it at home now.’ Year 4 child

‘It is not like reading. You get to listen to and the computer helps you.’ Year 3 child

By Sarah Annable
Does The Implementation of a Sensory Diet Improve the Academic Progress for Students with Autistic Spectrum Condition?

### Background and Context

“Our brain, through our senses, needs a balanced diet in order for us to be able to make sense of and function in the world we live. This is a sensory diet. We need to experience a variety of sensations each and every day in order to keep our brain energised, organised, alert or calm. With a regular, balanced sensory diet we are better prepared to respond appropriately to the demands of the world we live in.” (Autism Spectrum Australia, 2018). The increase in numbers of students with Autistic Spectrum Condition has brought about a change in teaching methods targeted at their needs. A sensory approach was trialed to investigate the suitability of this strategy for a specific group of students who struggle with access to learning in the classroom.

### Research

#### Ethics

All participants were made aware of the context and content of the action research and that it would be kept anonymous but publicly available. Informed consent was obtained from participants and parents before carrying out any research. Participants were able to withdraw or opt out of answering questions and participating at any time.

#### Methods

3 students had a baseline assessment taken from b squared. A sensory diet assessment was developed with an Occupational Therapist to create an appropriate plan of activities. The sensory diet was implemented by teachers and TAs. Observations of lessons incorporating sensory diet activities were carried out. Assessment data was collated. Questionnaires were completed by staff and students participating in the research.

#### Findings

Students had access to their sensory diet at least 4 times per week. Students were calmer and more receptive to learning in the classroom. National Curriculum Levels increased by at least 2 parts.

### Conclusions

- Sensory ‘tick-sheet’ to be used in EHCPs
- Occupational Therapist to be involved in EHCPs and early assessment
- More students to have access to a sensory diet across all key stages
- Additional research to be carried out to discover impact upon behaviour

### Recommended Reading

What is staff’s knowledge of Autism and practices? Catherine Brown/N0770695

Context
An alternative provision that provides 1:1 and group work for students aged 11-18, who are disengaged from mainstream education.

28 out of 50 students have a diagnosis of Autism.

Axcis Education (2017) states “6 in 10 young people and 7 in 10 of their parents say having a teacher who understands Autism is key.

The main title for research: What is staff’s knowledge of Autism and practices?

Key questions:
What do staff know about Autism behaviours?
How is this knowledge used in practice?
What behaviour management strategies are used?
How do staff use the knowledge when managing students behaviour?

Method
• Observations were planned before and after training, including student with Autism, in order to determine whether the staff were using the same policies and procedures throughout the day.
• Questionnaires were planned before and after training to collect views of staff members.
• Intervention/Training, following McCann (2017) model:
  • What is Autism?
  • What the provision does and how can we adapt practice?

An Ethical Approach
Ethical clearance checklist and ethical declaration were the first steps.

Gregory (2003) states the importance of confidentiality and consent. Paperwork was kept in a locked cabinet.

Informed consent was agreed. No inducements were offered neither were any photographs taken.

Participants’ Voice
“Difficult with change and transitions”.
“Advice from other staff to support me”.
“A clearer understanding of the condition has allowed me to better consider my teaching practice”.
“I have more knowledge about Autism behaviours”.
“Good reminder of how important it is sticking to the timetable and times”.
“I am now prepared with distraction techniques”.

Findings
Before Training
• Staff mentioned students with Autism:
  • “have difficulty interacting with other people socially plus interpreting body language”.
• From observations:
  • It was evident that staff found it difficult in consistently using behaviour management tools in sessions.
• In suggested improvement section: 4 out of 9 received to use clear instructions and 2 out of 9 to allow student voices.
• 3 out of 9 students were fully engaged and calm.

Training
• Focused on the 3 characteristics of Autism- social: communication, imagination and interaction. Plus policies and procedures, McCann (2017).
• It was agreed to follow the behaviour policy consistently and use the redirection method.

Conclusion and Recommendation
Behaviour / Consistency
The progress of students and the atmosphere has developed. Recommendation for a whole provision approach and an update to behaviour policy every training day. Staff now use training to support their knowledge of Autism. Sessions need to be organised, planned and engaging to increase engagement.

Effective Communication
“one size does not fit all”. Recommendations of having different communication skills.

Timetabling and timekeeping
The National Autism Society (2017) stated “Children and young people on the Autism Spectrum often need routine. This means that they can find unstructured times, such as lunch, particularly difficult”. Recommendation that a provision needs a routine to follow and to follow policies and procedures consistently. To include routines in training for new staff.

References


Images

The aim of this small-scale research was to achieve a better understanding of the centrality of language in the holistic learning process and to observe how speech and language difficulties can impact upon self-esteem, behaviour and holistic achievement amongst primary school aged children.

Proposed outcomes:
- Improving the progress in children with SLD and SEMH, by nurturing communication skills and targeting identified speech skills. In so doing, we hope to achieve improved self-esteem and monitor its effect upon progress and behaviour/anxiety issues.

Games include:
- Spelling champion
- Lego Therapy
- Story telling partners.
- Word links
- Jigsaw Buddies.

Inner Confidence

Parents and school, working together – providing continuity and quality intervention to support growth.

“Ask me about my day”.

A study of five children across KS1 and KS2 presenting with SEMH and speech and language difficulties. All children participated in the research programme over a six-week period, covering all activities at home and at school daily. Comments were recorded by parents, teachers and teaching assistants following each session to track interaction, engagement and noticeable changes. The interaction of the child in school with peers and staff and at home with carers and family members was noticeably positive, as was the positive impact upon behaviour and the child’s ability to begin to self-regulate.

Entry and exit questionnaires and Bosall profiles, provided a measure of the effectiveness of the programme, demonstrating positive development in self-worth, confidence in social interaction and increased resilience.

“All children should be expected to be involved in responding to questions, and also need to be taught how to develop effective questions of their own. This begins with creating a classroom environment where pupils feel safe to take risks and know they won’t be ridiculed for giving inaccurate responses”.


The power of play.

Encourage through Enjoyment.

Teach me to question and explore my environment and express my feelings.

When we nurture communication skills, we add colour to and make sense of our world!

“I don’t have that poorly feeling in my tummy any more”.

“T’ve got lots of friends now”.

An Investigation into the Impact of an ARNA (Anxiety Related Non Attendance) support base for a defined cohort of students identified as being ‘School Phobic’

By Adam Cave

Background

The issue of school non-attendance is an increasingly serious problem facing society Wilkins (2018). Poor mental health undermines educational attainment, Department for Education (2016). These students are found to be more likely to fall behind in their overall educational attainment. The following intervention:
- Involves up to 14 students who have anxiety about attending school
- Supportive environment supporting students pastorally
- Tracks attendance, progress and emotional regularity
- Changes in provision and access to lessons altered depending on need
- Access to Emotional Literacy support and Cookery sessions through the support team
- Attempts to break negative cycles of non school attendance.

Methods

The project used questionnaires to gain the views of the personalised centre manager and two students and their parents. Informed consent was given and all data used has been made anonymous. Other data collected was attendance and progress data for the students at each half term. Student J had a serious stomach problem affecting his attendance and anxiety about being around large volumes of students. Student M has an eating disorder due to anxiety and has been hospitalised on two occasions this year.

Findings

The intervention has increased attendance each term. Due to the low number of students involved each student has a significant impact on the figure.

The intervention has created a situation that in the majority of cases the longer the students are accessing the ARNA room the further away from their flight path they become.

“Amazing opportunity it is for students to get back into a mainstream environment”

“The teacher’s ability to empathise”

References


Conclusion

- Subjective views about the intervention suggest it is an invaluable provision to re engage students with school
- Attendance does increase, suggesting the school phobic anxieties are reduced
- Progress of students generally declines, possibly due to the student not having access to subject qualified staff
- The intervention will change its name next year recognising that students do attend and shouldn’t be classed as non attendance.
- Teachers need more accountability for the progress of each student
- A more robust and quicker system for transitioning students back into their class rather than risking dependency related anxiety.
What is the Impact of Introducing Visual Aids on Positive Participation of Pupils with SEMH, In Key Stage One?

**Context**
We are a smaller than average, rural primary school.
40% of our pupils on the SEND register and categorised as having SEMH needs, more than double the national average currently standing at 16.3%.
Pupils displaying concerning behaviours are on the increase in EYFS and Key Stage One.
Previous Nurture Group intervention has proved limiting due to frequent staff changes.
These pupils are working at an extremely low developmental level according to Boxall Profile.

A more robust, visual method of increasing trust and consistency was required.

**Method**
After ethical considerations were completed, initial Boxall Profiles and teacher questionnaires were carried out on 3 pupils identified from the population.
Visual timetables, reward charts, consequence ladders and emotion fans and charts introduced to all children in Key Stage One.
Pupils were re-assessed to establish whether progress was made.

**Findings**
Baseline assessments show high levels of incidences of concerning behaviours throughout each day.
After the implementation of the visual aids, all the pupils made progress, with one making significant progress.
The frequency and duration of concerning behaviours reduced dramatically.

**Recommendations**
A whole school set of rules to be developed and adopted.
To continue to use a consistent approach to behaviour management across the whole school.
Visual Timetables, a Consequence Ladder and rewards to be used in all classrooms.

**Teacher Voice:**
“We still have outbursts but these are far less frequent and last only a few minutes compared to before when episodes could last a full lesson or longer.”
“He is approaching staff with work he is proud of, asking to be moved up the ladder. This visual praise and reward has reduced the amount of work refusal significantly.”

**Pupil Voice:**
“Why don’t you try taking some deep breaths!”
“Have I made good choices? Can I have a sticker now?”
“Mummy will be so proud of me!”

**Parent Voice:**
When commenting on a positive reaction to her anger: “I was amazed, he would never have said anything like that before.”

**Ethical Considerations**
As the action research was carried out on young children, consent was obtained from parents.
Pupils were made aware that new interventions were introduced and their use identified.
Teacher and TA consent was obtained also.
NASENCO Award

SENCOs play a very important role in leading the co-ordination of provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in schools.

All state-funded mainstream schools in England, including Academies, free schools, university technical colleges and maintained nurseries are required to employ a teacher with qualified teacher status (QTS) in a Special Educational Co-ordinator (SENCO) role.

In September 2009 it became law for every new SENCO in a mainstream school to gain the Master’s-level National Award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) role.

The award has been developed to provide a critical and broad-based understanding of the theories and concepts surrounding inter-professional working with children and young people experiencing barriers to learning. It will help you further develop your practice as a committed, responsible and creative professional, capable of critical thinking and practical action and support you in enhancing whole-school provision for pupils who have Special Educational Needs or disabilities.

For more information, or to find a provider near you, please e-mail nasencogroup@gmail.com
The National Award for SEN Co-ordination
One thing that I have done

“Led ITT training based on knowledge gained from the NASENCO course”

“Gained the confidence to ask questions and challenge practice”

“Challenged the non-existent provision for pupils with SEN. Challenged meaningless policies and started to ensure these pupils are represented and thought about for inclusivity”

“Learned that inclusion starts at ‘Hello’”

“I have learned – ‘knowledge is power’ but we don’t need to be experts in everything”

“Discussed SEN support and my vision with the Head and SLT”

“Used reading and research to have a positive impact in school”

“I’ve made adjustments to our interventions and became a better teacher”

“Reflected – why do we do things the way we do?”

“Interviewed children with SEN – enlightening – I learned new things about each child”

“I have made more time to listen to pupil and parent voice and ensured other staff also do so”

“Discuss SEN support and my vision with the Head and SLT”
About nasen

We are the National Association of Special Educational Needs (nasen), a charitable organisation that have proudly been operating since 1992. It is our mission to promote the advancement and development of all individuals with SEND/ALN and we aim to achieve this by supporting thousands of educational practitioners, equipping them with the most effective and current resources and training.

To find out more about who we are and what we do, please visit our website: www.nasen.org.uk or call us on 01827 311500.