

Cognition and learning

Child or young person's voice as told to professionals



Whole school approaches

Differentiation for children and young people with these needs ensures the development of literacy, numeracy, expressive language and communication skills.

The curriculum is delivered at a level appropriate for the learners' age and stage of development i.e. learners who are attaining at a level significantly behind their peers are taught a curriculum that is adapted and suited to their age and areas of interest.

Arrangements to support the use and delivery of approaches and resources for students with specific learning difficulties.

ICT is used to support learning.

TAs are trained and skilled in supporting children and young people with general and specific learning difficulties.

What you will see

(The difficulty/barrier, how this presents and the impact on the learner)

Difficulties with learning (where, despite appropriate approaches and interventions and developing understanding of the learner's needs, the rate of progress is reducing or static and the gap between same age peers with a similar starting point is increasing).

Learners will have much greater difficulty than their peers in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills and in understanding concepts. They may also have associated speech and language delay, low self-esteem, low levels of concentration and underdeveloped social skills

Difficulty with:

- Pace of whole class teaching and learning.
- Acquiring basic numeracy skills.
- Understanding basic mathematical concepts e.g. time.
- Understanding and/or remembering classroom instructions .
- Distinguishing between Who? What? Where? When? How? and Why? questions.
- Understanding verbal explanations.
- Memory (short-term, working or long-term).
- Learning, remembering and using appropriate curriculum vocabulary.

You may also see:

- A lack of confidence and reluctance to take risks with new learning situations.
- Distractibility, passivity or tiredness.
- Low self-esteem.
- High level of dependence on adult support.
- A tendency to copy peers.
- Reluctance or inability to ask for help.

What can help

(Provision – strategies, interventions and resources)

- Assessment through teaching to identify the areas of need in consultation with the learner.
- Clear and simple instructions, breaking down longer instructions and giving one at a time.
- Visual timetable.
- Visual cues and prompts.
- Social Stories™.
- Give time before response is needed.
- Pre-teaching – e.g. provision of a teacher or TA (overseen by a teacher) to help prepare the learner for the new topic.
- Shared next steps – so they know what to expect.
- Differentiated resource – teach the curriculum appropriate to the child, not their chronological age.
- Small group and individual support.
- Plan opportunities for success and celebrate those successes.

What you will see

Difficulties with working memory:

- Struggles with pace of teaching and learning.
- Struggles to follow instructions – can do the first step.
- Easily distracted.
- Unable to complete homework even if explained and differentiated.
- Fails to complete tasks.
- Poor organisation.
- Copies/follow others.
- Poor organisation.
- Appears anxious and/or avoidant of tasks or activities.
- May not ask for help or is highly dependent on adult support.

What can help

- Give the 'big picture' and context at the start of a new topic and revisit throughout.
- Note-taking as an approach for all.
- Provide working walls, word maps, lists, checklists, task boards, templates and storyboards.
- Visual support/reminders – multisensory approach.
- Aim to provide 'check-in' support rather than constant individual attention.
- Provide opportunities for repetition and overlearning.
- Memory activities and games to support the development of strategies to support memory.

What you will see

Specific learning difficulties affecting one or more aspects of learning including reading, spelling, writing, handwriting, arithmetic, or mathematical reasoning and/or memory which significantly impacts their ability to learn and demonstrate their learning.

(N.B. a small number of children may have a formal diagnosis/educational determination, for example, dyslexia, dyscalculia or dyspraxia. For all areas of need any provision or support should be provided in line with the needs of the child or young person and is NOT dependant on any formal diagnosis.)

Difficulty with (some or all of the following):

- Auditory processing.
- Phonological awareness – segmenting and blending phonemes.
- Decoding words.
- Difficulties with learning phonics beyond the simple alphabetic code.
- Reading - Inaccurate or slow.
- Visual processing.
- Poor word recognition skills.
- Writing - requires much effort.
- Frequent and inconsistent spelling errors.
- Handwriting and formatting on the page.
- Copying from a worksheet, screen or board.
- Acquisition and retention of mathematical concepts e.g. Place Value.
- Remembering number facts and inability to use efficient calculation strategies to solve number problems e.g. counting on fingers rather than using number facts.
- Mathematical reasoning.
- Working memory.

What can help

- Acknowledge and encourage good oral contributions whenever possible.
- Metacognition approaches – learning to learn by trying to understand the learner's difficulty and asking them what helps.
- Use strategies and approaches recommended in advice from assessments and consultations.
- Evidence-based interventions to develop skills
- Make simple adaptations e.g. font, line spacing, coloured paper, lighting etc.
- Encourage the learner to celebrate their strengths and achievements in all areas of life.

Reading

- Allow extra time to read and absorb information.
- Avoid asking the child to read in front of others unless they want to.
- Teach strategies to help track words on the page.

Spelling

- Mark written work on content rather than spelling.
- Highlight/tick the correct parts of the word rather than errors.
- Provide high frequency word / topic word lists.
- Use inbuilt accessibility features of tablets, phones or laptops e.g. speech to text functions.
- Use dyslexia friendly software e.g. CLICKER.
- Use colour to highlight spelling patterns.

What you will see

- Avoidant or disruptive behaviour when being asked to engage in literacy- or numeracy-based tasks.
- Variation in performance day by day.
- Poor organisation skills.
- Anxiety when asked to read out loud.
- Poor written expression with a limited quantity of writing when compared to verbal expression.

What can help

Writing / Handwriting

- Reduce written homework requirements.
- Substitute an alternative task (e.g. work on NESSY or Wordshark) for spelling test.
- Allow and encourage alternative methods other than handwriting when recording work.
- Use of a scribe or voice recording for some tasks.
- Teach touch-typing.
- Encourage and support word processing for written work where possible.
- Check suitability of chair/desk, posture and paper placement.
- Provide with left/right-handed pens and pencils as appropriate.

Working memory

- Chunk instructions one step at a time and check understanding throughout task.
- Allow extra time for the pupil to write down written instructions or give assistance.
- Provide and teach how to use working walls, word maps, lists, checklists, task boards templates and story boards as appropriate.
- Provide opportunities for repetition and over-learning.
- Support pupils to copy from the board allowing extra time or provide a personal copy to have on their desk.
- Aim to provide “check-in” support rather than constant individual attention.
- Give homework tasks and important instructions in pictorial or written form.
- Encourage use of different coloured pens to highlight work and provide markers.

What you will see

What can help

Mathematics

- Use manipulatives such as Numicon.
- Talk through number concepts out loud, communicating thinking in a verbal, diagrammatic and written form.
- Use number games.
- Use of visual programmes such as Number Shark to target gaps in learning.
- Follow a structured approach to build understanding of concepts.
- Acknowledge and encourage good oral contributions whenever possible.
- Metacognition approaches – learning to learn by trying to understand the learner's difficulty and asking them what helps.
- Use strategies and approaches recommended in advice from assessments and consultations.
- Evidence-based interventions to develop skills.
- Make simple adaptations e.g. font, line spacing, coloured paper, lighting etc.
- Encourage the learner to celebrate their strengths and achievements in all areas of life.