Learning and teaching for children with special educational needs in the primary years
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The coloured bars at the side of each page relate to the corresponding colour buttons on the DVD menu. Each button leads to the appropriate video clip for the section of text.
Introduction

Purpose of materials

These materials consist of a DVD and accompanying notes.

They have been developed in the light of the expressed view of many teachers that they do not feel confident in including children with severe and/or complex special educational needs (SEN) in their classroom. This is in the context of increased diversity of the needs of children in our classrooms and the emphasis that is rightly placed on the achievement of every individual child.

In recent years the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have published a range of materials to support teachers and SENCOs. This publication exemplifies some of that work and aims to help teachers to translate the suggested practice into their individual classrooms.

The materials have been developed in particular for teachers who work with children in Year 1 to Year 6. SENCOs will find the materials helpful when planning professional development activities. Elements of the booklet and DVD relate to whole-school practices that are important for headteachers and senior management teams. Some of the ideas described may be transferable to early years settings and practitioners.

One of the most important intentions of these materials is that, through engaging with the video clips and professional development activities, teachers will be supported in reflecting on their own practice alongside colleagues. It is through discussion about, and reflection on, their own teaching, their own school and the children they teach that the practice of all concerned will be most effectively developed and enhanced.

It has been a question of academic debate whether there is a specific SEN pedagogy or whether ‘good teaching is good teaching for all’. (See Teaching Strategies and Approaches for Pupils with Special Educational Needs DfES Research Report RR516 2004). These materials do not attempt to resolve the debate but do reiterate the need for high quality teaching for all to be promoted in order for children with SEN to learn. The materials do not therefore concentrate on approaches for children with specific labels or disabilities. They focus on the conditions that will enhance the learning of all children, including those children with severe and/or complex SEN. They attempt to make overt some of the intuitive and additional practices demonstrated by confident and experienced teachers that help children who have difficulties to learn more effectively.

Special Educational Needs can be usefully organised into four areas:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- behaviour, emotional and social development
- sensory and/or physical.

Individual pupils may have complex needs when their needs span two or more areas.
To enable children with SEN to make progress, schools are expected to implement the National Curriculum inclusion statement. The inclusion statement sets out three principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum:

- setting suitable learning challenges;
- responding to pupils’ diverse learning needs;
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

The principles as they relate to good classroom practice can be represented schematically:

The circles of inclusion

This means that children will be more effectively included where appropriate consideration has been given to:

- what the child will learn;
- what teaching methods will be used;
- what ways of bypassing barriers to learning have been chosen for particular children.

Applying the National Curriculum inclusion statement in this way shows that there are often many routes to helping children with severe and/or complex needs to learn rather than single ‘solutions’. In these materials certain approaches are recommended. It must be recognised, however, that these may not suit some individuals. The choice lies with the informed professionalism of the teacher, working with teaching assistants, other professionals, parents/carers and the child.

Inclusion will be promoted and learning enhanced for children with SEN and disabilities in an environment where adults and children problem-solve and know it is
safe to take risks. The ideal environment will be one where children build on what they are good at, and where their teachers use effective approaches in both familiar and different contexts and then ensure that children’s effort and achievement are recognised by the people who value them – their peers and the significant adults around them.

These materials are intended to support the further development of this kind of learning environment, which already exists in many schools.

Structure of the materials

This booklet contains a description of some of the key approaches that effectively support the learning and teaching of children with special educational needs. It is structured to complement *Excellence and Enjoyment: Learning and Teaching in the Primary Years* to be published by the Primary National Strategy in September 2004. The headings in that publication are also used here:

- Planning and assessment for learning
  - Designing opportunities for learning
  - Assessment for learning
- Creating a learning culture
  - The conditions for learning
  - Classroom, community, collaborative and personalised learning

At the end of each section there are some suggested activities to follow up particular areas of focus.

The DVD contains video clips of current work in a range of schools. On screen you will see key points that exemplify the key messages in this booklet. The coloured bars at the side of each page in this booklet indicate the appropriate video clip on the DVD.

How to use these materials

It is anticipated that the materials could be used:

- by individual teachers who are interested in improving their own practice in this area through self-study;
- as part of school-based continuing professional development (CPD) led by the subject leader (probably the SENCO), in which the staff group work together on an identified and shared priority;
- by specialist teams in local authorities in CPD sessions where the video clips or text can be used to support their work.

You and your colleagues could watch the video clips on the DVD together and discuss the way in which the teachers are ensuring that all children with special educational needs are accessing learning. You may want to focus on one aspect of practice you wish to develop, for example, inclusive teaching strategies. You may want to read the text in the booklet and talk about the issues it raises.
Research tells us that the most effective professional development includes peer support and provides opportunities to work with others and share practice. CPD is also likely to be most effective where there is a direct relationship with what you are doing in your own classroom. We have, therefore, provided some suggested activities for you to carry out to follow up on your reading and watching the video sequences. We hope these will encourage you to reflect, to try out new practices and then review your actions in discussion with your colleagues.

Video sequences

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The schools

Montem Primary School, London Borough of Islington
Montem Primary School has 430 pupils on roll. It serves a large inner city catchment area where there are significant areas of social deprivation. It experiences high mobility. Approximately 55% of pupils have a first language other than English. 56% of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Cleves Primary School, London Borough of Newham
Cleves Primary School has 450 pupils on roll. It includes a number of pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties. It has high mobility. The overall percentage of pupils with SEN is well above the national average. Over 50% of pupils speak English as an additional language. 50% of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Manor Oak Primary School, London Borough of Bromley
Manor Oak has 85 pupils on roll. It serves one of the most disadvantaged areas in the country. Nearly 75% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Pupils join the school with very low academic standards and high incidence of special educational needs (mainly learning and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties). Approximately 40% of pupils come from a traveller background.

Ferndown First School, Dorset
Ferndown First School has 437 pupils on roll. Pupils come from a broad range of social, economic and academic backgrounds. Attainment on entry is below average.
Planning and assessment for learning

Designing opportunities for learning

The principles of planning for teachers

Planning for children with SEN should lead to more effective learning and teaching. It should not be cumbersome or onerous and it should be closely related to the process of planning for all children.

It should:

■ build on the curriculum and the provision in the whole school;
■ emphasise what a child will learn, rather than the activities they will do, and be based on an assessment of what the child already knows, understands and can do;
■ determine the teaching styles that will be used to match the needs of individuals or groups so that all children are engaged in learning;
■ establish the access strategies that will help overcome the potential barriers to that learning taking place;
■ be a collaborative exercise where the teacher can draw on the skills and knowledge of others, for example, teaching assistants, SENCO and other professionals;
■ be embedded into the teacher’s usual planning format.

1. Planning for a broad and rich curriculum

Along with a culture of high expectations, the richness and creativity of the curriculum is a right for all children and care must be taken to ensure that this is not restricted. Teachers need to ensure that all children have new and varied opportunities where they may be able to succeed. Each school is responsible for delivering the curriculum so that provision carefully matches local need.

For an individual teacher, planning for children with SEN will not only include learning that takes place in the classroom and through educational visits and different curricular initiatives but also learning that takes place in small groups and individual sessions. A child with SEN may have additional support in place that needs to be integrated into the whole picture. A child may have been assessed as likely to benefit from a literacy or mathematics intervention programme, mentoring or a social skills group. This means that the balance of the child’s week or half-term needs to be examined to ensure a mixture of curricular coverage, of activity, of support and of learning opportunities. Evidence suggests that one of the significant factors in the achievement of pupils with SEN is the successful integration of any additional interventions into the curriculum on offer to everyone.
2. **What will the child learn?**

The first question to ask is whether the child can, with appropriate access strategies and teaching styles, work on the same learning objectives as the rest of the class.

If they cannot, as is likely with many children with cognition and learning difficulties, it is necessary to choose appropriate learning objectives that are related to the aspect of the subject on which the whole class is working. If working in literacy or mathematics, you can track back through the objectives in the NLS and NNS Frameworks to locate earlier learning objectives. This is sometimes called ‘**multi-level curriculum planning**’. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy document *Including all children in the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson: management guide* (DfES 0465/2002) provides guidance on tracking back. In other subjects you may find the QCA/DfES documents *Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties* a helpful resource (QCA/01/736 www.nc.uk.net/ld).

Your planning for individual children or groups of children based on assessment for learning will be informed by your knowledge of their priorities. For the majority of the time it will be appropriate for children to work on objectives that are similar and related to the whole class. However, at other times you will also have to consider whether the children have other priority needs that are central to their learning, for example a need to concentrate on some key skills. These might include participation in activities, communication, problem solving, working with others, managing their own emotions and so on. These needs may be detailed in the child’s individual education plan or statement of special educational need. These can be best met within the whole-class learning; for example, relating communication objectives to literacy lessons, problem
solving to mathematics, history or geography. This is sometimes called ‘curriculum overlapping’ and challenges ideas that certain subjects are ‘inappropriate’ because of the needs of children with severe or complex disabilities. A child with severe learning difficulties can, for example, be learning about turn-taking in the context of collaborative group work in a Year 4 history lesson about Celts and Romans. This results in overlap between the curriculum experienced by the child with SEN, and the curriculum that other children in the class are following.

Some children may have additional needs such as requirements for the therapy input or needs that cannot easily be met via multi-level curriculum planning or by curriculum overlapping. For these children you may sometimes decide that you need to plan different objectives to meet specific needs and give these identified time. This is sometimes referred to as ‘alternative activities or curriculum’. This is legitimate as long as it is in the context of ensuring that all children receive a broad and balanced curriculum offer.

3. What teaching styles will help the child?

Your knowledge and assessment of your class and the individuals and particular special educational needs within it will determine which styles are most helpful. You may consider visual, auditory and kinaesthetic approaches to learning. You may want to consider the length of the session, the mixture of individual, group and collaborative work, the mixture of teacher- and teaching assistant-directed work. At this point you may think about the use of questioning and alternatives to questions, modelling, explaining and demonstration. Planning might also include considering whether the child needs short or long tasks, and the extent to which tasks should be open-ended or closed.

4. What access strategies are needed?

Another element of planning is identifying strategies which will help all children access the learning objectives you have chosen. It is helpful to ask yourself ‘What are the barriers that might get in the way here?’ The barriers might be, for example, the language you use to explain a task, the amount you are asking a child to recall at once, or the requirement to record ideas in writing for a child who does not write fluently. In planning you may consider overcoming these barriers by pre-teaching concepts or key vocabulary, the use of mixed-ability, collaborative small-group work, or alternative methods of recording. You may use alternative means of accessing the curriculum through ICT, adapted materials or specialist equipment. You may support learning through the use of concrete materials, by the use of buddying and by using any available additional adult support in a targeted way. There is a checklist of such inclusive teaching strategies on pages 39–42 of this booklet.
5. Planning collaboratively

There are always time restraints but planning collaboratively is invaluable. Problem solving with colleagues who have different perspectives but share the goal of maximising learning can be very helpful. The perspective of a teaching assistant who has been working closely with a child and has carried out close observation of misconceptions will be highly relevant when planning the next steps. The input of a SENCO who has knowledge of the specific needs and provision throughout the school will be helpful. Opportunities to gain the perspectives of speech and language therapist, occupational therapist or physiotherapist or other specialist colleagues can also enhance planning. Such specialists will have helpful assessment information and can suggest additional activities to support learning.

One of the main weaknesses of school provision that impacts on the achievement of pupils with SEN can be a lack of coordination between whole-class and specialist work. Where it is uncoordinated there is too great a reliance on withdrawing children for individual support and a lack of shared planning between the special educational needs support teacher and the class teacher. The result is that neither knows what the other is teaching, and there is too little systematic evaluation of children’s progress and attainment. This can result in the activities for children who are withdrawn for specific support being insufficiently linked to whole-class work.

6. Embedding your planning for children with SEN into your usual teaching plans

As far as possible, do this by planning for groups – planning the questions you will ask different groups and the things you will demonstrate to them in whole-class teaching, and planning group and independent work that builds in appropriate access strategies and draws on different learning styles. After this, think about the child or children with very ‘individual’ special educational needs (those that are more complex or severe) and annotate your weekly planning with brief notes on the learning objectives, teaching styles and access strategies you want to use to support their learning. Make sure that this annotation sets out the role of any additional adults who will be working with the child, so that they, you and wherever possible the child will know who is doing what and when. See Including all children in the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson: management guide (DfES 0465/2002) for more information.
Video sequence

The video sequence that accompanies this section is called ‘Designing opportunities for learning’. In it you will see a class teacher, SENCO, and two classroom assistants taking part in a planning meeting. At Ferndown School the SENCO has established a ‘needs-led’ model of SEN provision. This means that she allocates any additional adult support in line with the priorities in the school at that time. As this particular Year 2 class contains a large number of children who are experiencing difficulty with reading, she has allocated some time to support the class herself and organised some small-group work to take place with the teaching assistants to give targeted speech and language support to some identified individuals.

In particular the video sequence highlights:
- tracking back to identify appropriate learning objectives for children with SEN;
- collaborative work with other adults.

Suggested activities

Work with a colleague and look at your own planning procedures and your written records.

- Do they address the six key areas that have been described in the bullet points on page 7 of this booklet in a manageable way?
- Are they clear about what the child with SEN will learn?
- Are they clear to your colleague?
- Are the access strategies clear?
- Is the role of the additional adult clear in supporting the learning intention?

Have a look at page 67 onwards of *Including all children in the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson* (DfES 0465/2002). Compare your own planning with the annotated examples. Would an approach like this help you?

As a whole staff, discuss whether there are any opportunities that could be made for collaborative planning to enhance problem solving. Where could time be found for collaborative planning? How much time would you need? Where might you find it from? How will you use that time together?
Consider the experience of a child with complex and/or severe special educational needs during a day or a week by looking at your planning or doing some regular observations and keeping a note. Ask the following questions of your evidence. Is the child receiving:

- a varied curriculum;
- a variety of activities;
- a variety of teaching styles;
- opportunities to work alone, in a small group, with an adult, with different adults and without an adult;
- opportunities to learn new skills, to revisit emergent skills and to generalise others;
- opportunities for self-directed activity;
- opportunities to have personal needs or therapeutic needs met as well as learning needs?

Does the balance feel appropriate and likely to be the balance that will improve learning the most? Adjust, if necessary, and monitor the impact on learning.

Plan a lesson that at first glance you might consider ‘too difficult’ for a child with SEN. Plan one or a combination of the following:

- the child working on the same objectives as the class as a whole;
- the child working on different objectives within the same subject (multi-level curriculum planning);
- the child working on different objectives that can be met through the activities planned in the lesson, for example, language, problem solving, cooperation objectives (curriculum overlapping);
- the child working on alternative therapeutic or individual objectives (alternative activities/curriculum).

Teach the lesson and reflect on your choices and the impact on the learning for the child. If you have chosen to teach an alternative objective, consider how the child will experience the content of this lesson on another occasion.

If you are going to make any changes to your planning, agree that you will trial any amendments for a fixed amount of time and review with your colleagues. When reviewing, remember that the main success criteria is that planning should lead to improved learning and teaching.
Planning and assessment for learning

Assessment for learning

According to the Assessment Reform Group, ‘Assessment for learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there’.

Research has found the factors that improve learning through assessment are:

- providing effective feedback to pupils;
- actively involving pupils in their own learning;
- adjusting teaching to take account of the results of assessment;
- recognising the profound influence assessment has on the motivation and self-esteem of pupils, both of which are crucial to learning;
- considering the need for pupils to be able to assess themselves and to understand how to improve.

Effective assessment for learning with children who have SEN should be based on developing the following six areas:

1. Designing learning opportunities – planning
2. Using the context of whole-school curricular targets
3. Effective strategies for day-to-day assessment
4. Feedback on learning
5. Involving parents and carers
6. Formative use of summative assessment to inform and involve learners

1. Designing learning opportunities – planning

Focusing on learning at the planning stage means:

- being clear about the teaching/learning objectives in medium- and short-term planning and sharing them with the children;
- planning the key focus points for the teaching and the learning (the success criteria) and involving the children in being aware and even part of the creation of the agreed success criteria;
- making sure that the context is designed to enable the learning objective to be fulfilled;
- feeling free to change the context of the learning at any time if the learning objective is not being fulfilled.

For children with complex and/or severe special needs the process around the individual education plan will provide one opportunity to engage in this aspect of assessment for learning. Discussion and review in a regular and structured form allow reflection on objectives, progress and continued reflection on strengths, weaknesses and barriers to learning. The process also enables the teacher to work with
parents/carers and gain their perceptions of their child’s strengths and weaknesses, behaviour, interests outside school, what they enjoy and what motivates them and what teaching styles and classroom contexts have particularly suited them in the past. This process allows the involvement of child, teacher, parents/carers and any other appropriate professional in setting targets and agreeing success criteria.

In order to be able to review learning effectively and plan the next steps, it is recognised good practice to annotate the child’s work. For children with SEN, this may mean making notes about the level of scaffolding, physical or verbal prompting offered.

2. Using the context of whole-school curricular targets

When curricular targets have been identified as whole-school priorities and areas for improvement have been translated into year group targets, targets for classes, for groups of children and individuals, they steer improvements and guide teaching for all children, including those with special educational needs.

The importance of setting curricular targets in an SEN context was confirmed in a recent Ofsted survey, Setting targets for pupils with special educational needs (Ofsted, 2004). The survey established that target setting has the greatest impact (on learning) when it focuses on precise curriculum objectives for individuals and when it forms part of the whole-school improvement process.
3. Effective strategies for day-to-day assessment

Effective day-to-day assessment strategies include:

- using questions and sharing comments with children;
- making observations of children during teaching and while they work;
- holding discussions with children;
- analysing work, reporting to children and guiding their improvements;
- engaging children in the assessment process.

These strategies are neither exhaustive nor exclusive: questioning may be part of and lead to discussion; analysing may direct observation or lead to testing; deciding when and how to engage children in assessment may be informed by each of the other elements. The crucial feature of any day-to-day assessment is that it helps to inform and improve teaching and learning. While each of the elements may be employed at different times and for different purposes, the overarching purpose is to determine the extent of children’s understanding so that informed decisions can be taken about teaching and determining the next steps in children’s learning.

**Questioning**

Prompting and probing questions to assess understanding and capacity to generalise are particularly valuable as they allow misconceptions to be diagnosed and rectified. They need to be planned carefully and focused if they are to form a reliable picture of a child’s learning. For children with SEN you may need to think about the extra processing time the child will need. For example, you might plan to ask the child a question, and give them time to think about it by moving on to another child before asking for a response. It will also be important to make sure that questions are challenging and designed to enable the child to demonstrate their learning.

**Observing**

Observations allow a first-hand evaluation in context. The teacher and child can then discuss this so that it is learning experience for both. Observations can be time-consuming and be criticised as ‘one-offs’ but if these are planned observations of targeted children they can give valuable insights into their achievement, particularly when children do not record their learning in the traditional ways. They can also give insights about the child’s responses to teaching and about their behaviour. In some settings class teachers find it helpful to ask teaching assistants to carry out structured observations. Always try to gather information on the type of task or setting where the child succeeds as well as the areas where things do not go so well: such observations provide vital clues to contextual factors that might be contributing to the child’s difficulties.

**Discussing**

Discussions with children are particularly illuminating. They allow children to articulate their successes against targets and reflect on their progress. They allow for follow-up to learning outcomes and further diagnosis of difficulties. Such discussions develop
empathy with a child who is having difficulty, opening a window for the teacher into the child’s world. It has to be recognised that these discussions need time and a child may need structure and support to communicate and articulate their difficulties. These situations are often learning opportunities for adults as well and require the application of some active listening skills by the teacher. As teachers, many of us are not used to truly listening to children with special educational needs and, as we know, the history of disabled people is often one of not being heard.

Analyzing children’s work
Analyzing children’s work through focused marking and sampling can reveal progress and misconceptions. It may identify barriers that the child experiences over time and over topics. Focused marking can be particular useful in that it can avoid the negativity that might become associated with the teacher’s pen. It allows constructive comments on the particular criteria, agreed in advance by the teacher and the children, which would indicate success against the learning intentions for the piece of work. It helps the child by pointing out next steps. For children with SEN, particular thought must be given to the way in which practical, collaborative and oral work might be captured and analysed.

Engaging children in the assessment process
Engaging in self- or peer-review with a partner is powerful as it enables children to reflect on the strategies they have used and encourages responsibility. It is often a valuable experience for a child with SEN to be asked to comment on another’s work and has clear benefits in self-esteem and self-advocacy. It can also help in setting the next target for learning.

4. Feedback on learning
Oral feedback
Focusing on success and improvement against the learning objective of the task is the most effective focus for oral feedback. The language of the classroom, especially the incidental talk that goes on while the class are working, gives strong messages to children. Schools have trialled changing the way in which they talk to children about difficulties, instead of saying, for instance:

‘I know you are having difficulty with this. Don’t worry – I’m going to help you.’

Teachers began to use words like this:

‘It’s making you think because you are learning something you didn’t know before and I am here to help.’
‘When you find something challenging, it is an opportunity to learn something new.’
‘Now you’ll learn something that you didn’t know before. Then it won’t be hard the next time you meet it.’
‘This is how we learn. If everything is easy, it means you already knew how to do it, so there’s no new learning.’

These teachers said that they noticed, as a result of this language, that children were less afraid to make mistakes, that children with special education needs and those of
higher ability had increased their self-esteem and that children were more able now to admit their difficulties.

**Written feedback**

Focusing on identifying elements of success and one or two areas to improve, against the learning objective of the task, is most effective in helping children develop skills and concepts and be able to apply them in future contexts.

Research shows that too much written feedback is largely inaccessible to children and this is often the case with children with SEN. Written feedback will be most effective when children are supported in reading feedback and then are able to embed and apply any improvement suggestions to later work.

**5. Involving parents and carers**

Ongoing contact with parents/carers will allow you to understand more about how a child learns best and how this can be applied to support the child’s learning at home and in the classroom. Ongoing contact will allow the sharing of concerns and successes and planning any action necessary.

**6. Formative use of summative assessment to inform and involve learners**

Testing will give information on a child’s knowledge, achievements and attainments in relation to their peers. It can be diagnostic and will guide future learning and teaching. Testing is particularly important for children with SEN in that it helps to assess the rate of progress brought about by planned interventions. Repeated at intervals over a period of time, tests will show whether the strategies that have been put in place to support the child are (for children with less complex or severe needs) helping to narrow the gap between their performance and that of their peers, or (for children with more complex and/or severe needs) are enabling them to make progress at a rate similar to or better than children with similar starting points and learning needs.

Involving children in the feedback from summative assessments will help them understand their areas of strength, areas for development and next steps. In many cases, it will enable you to give positive messages to children about the progress they have made.

**The child with SEN as a partner in the learning process**

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES, 2001), and *Removing Barriers to Achievement – The Government’s Strategy for SEN* (DfES, 0117/2004) advocate and have an expectation that the views of children are taken into account as we work with them.

Assessment for learning provides a way of making sure that children’s views are heard. It involves both the child and the teacher in a process of reflection and review of their progress. Children become empowered to take appropriate action and teachers become empowered to adjust their plans and the learning environment.
There is often a concern that children with SEN become passive learners who develop a kind of ‘learned helplessness’ and do not feel able to take responsibility for their own learning and their own achievements. When the child with SEN is a partner in the learning process there is evidence that this view can successfully be challenged. The evidence points to significant benefits, which include:

- greater insights by the child and the teacher on how the child learns best;
- increased task focus;
- reduced dependency;
- profound improvements in self-esteem;
- increased willingness to participate in lessons;
- the development of a more mature and positive attitude to schoolwork;
- a lessening of behaviour problems;
- improved communication skills;
- improved teacher–pupil relationships;
- children who have overcome a particular problem passing on the benefits of their experience.

The SEN Toolkit (DfES, 2001) gives helpful guidance on the development of pupil participation. It highlights the role of the whole-school ethos, whole-school approaches, school and class councils as well as pastoral support systems. It also describes the skills and preconditions that adults need to develop if children’s views are to be listened to.

Through involving the child, you will be able to improve teaching and learning because you will capture vital information on:

- the barriers a child encounters in your setting, which may be attitudinal, environmental or in learning;
what helps and what hinders the child’s access to the curriculum;
- the impact of your work;
- the strengths a child has;
- the gaps a child might have in their learning;
- what the child values;
- what the child thinks are appropriate and meaningful targets.

Video sequence

The video sequence that accompanies this section is called ‘Assessment for learning’. It has two video clips. In the first, a small group of Year 1 to Year 3 children, the majority of whom have SEN, are reflecting on mind-maps they have prepared about ‘What makes a good learner?’ In the second, a Year 6 class teacher reflects with a girl who has behavioural, emotional, social and literacy needs. They reflect on her progress and her individual targets.

In particular the sequences highlight:
- children reflecting on their own learning and their own learning styles;
- the importance of discussion;
- the further development of understanding and empathy between the teacher and child;
- the shared ownership of targets;
- the skills of listening to children with particular needs.

Suggested activities

Make a time to talk with a child with complex or severe needs or a child whose behaviour you find challenging. Think about the best context for this and what scaffolding they might need.

Consider the following ‘agenda’

Ask them what they think they are good at.
Ask them about their difficulties.
Explore whether they successfully use learning strategies in one context that might be transferable to another.
Ask them what gets in the way of their learning.
Engage in some ‘blue sky thinking’ with them and design a different sort of classroom that would help them.
Consider some of these ‘blue sky’ ideas together and agree to take some risks and change some things that you both do.

Try out the ideas

Arrange to meet the child again and discuss whether learning has improved.
Consider your classroom. What is the one Assessment for Learning strategy you would like to improve and concentrate on? Find out some more information about the skills that are necessary through reading, surfing the Internet, observing or talking with colleagues. Set up some time to practise this and use your findings when setting yourself targets.

Devise a question that you want to explore that will further your understanding of children’s learning or of the barriers to learning and participation that they experience. Which procedure would be most effective to collect the evidence? Set aside some time to carry this out in the next two weeks. Within the next month discuss with the children and your colleagues your hypotheses and conclusions and the actions you intend to take as a result.

In your class, how are children currently involved in:

- establishing rules and routines;
- assessing, recording and reviewing their own progress;
- setting their own targets;
- making decisions about the strategies and interventions put in place to help them and the use of additional adult support?

How could these be extended? How could they improve teaching and learning? Agree to trial an approach and bring back results to a colleague in a month.

Consider the effectiveness of reviewing IEPs in your class and the way these documents and procedures contribute to progress for the child. Are there ways in which they could be improved? Examine issues such as the targets, the timescales, the issues of discussion and ownership: teacher, child and parent/carer.
Creating a learning culture

The conditions for learning

Getting the fundamentals in place in the school as a whole

Inclusive teaching will develop in a school where inclusion and achievement are valued and staff feel supported by each other and by the senior management team. Children with special educational needs are more likely to be effectively included where there is a climate of acceptance of all children and where there is a whole-school approach to the achievement of all.

Whole-school expectations that are regularly reviewed will help to overcome the environmental barriers to inclusion; these may be attitudes, policies or practices. Recognising the needs of different groups and meeting these through problem solving and collaboration will help to empower children, staff and parents/carers to build an effective inclusive community.

Video sequence

The video sequence that accompanies this section is called ‘Getting the fundamentals in place in the school as a whole’. In it staff from two schools discuss how they are developing inclusive practice in their schools.

In particular the sequence highlights:
- the importance of learning and achievement for all;
- the valuing of individuals;
- the importance of team work and support.

Suggested activity

Discuss the following questions with your colleagues:
How is the achievement of all recognised and celebrated in the school?
How is the development of inclusive learning and teaching supported?
Consider areas of strengths and development. Agree to implement one key change.

Getting the fundamentals in place in the classroom environment

Children will be included where they are valued and accepted. They will be more successfully included in a classroom that is managed to consider the needs of all. Flexibility is a key asset to develop. Many successful teachers are realistic and acknowledge that they have had to learn to manage, tolerate and try to understand different needs (particularly behaviour) before they could contemplate ‘valuing and accepting’.
An atmosphere in which everyone has the opportunity to contribute is important, from answering a question to feeding back their opinion, achievements and learning in a plenary session. Asking friends or adult supporters to speak for children is not desirable; scaffolding, preparing a child’s response before the session, allowing more response time or different forms of response (for example, a smile, thumbs up) are to be preferred.

The way in which teachers refer to children and the language that teachers, support staff and children use when talking about children and their difficulties is important. This is not ‘political correctness’. Many of the words that historically have been used to describe disability and special educational needs are offensive. Talking over the heads of children about them (whatever their level of cognitive or language understanding) is demeaning.

The classroom environment is an opportunity to celebrate the inclusion of all and help everyone to learn. Images that recognise difference are imperative. Displays of work that everyone can be rightly proud of create a positive atmosphere to which everyone contributes. A pictorial timetable, key words, hundred squares, symbols, rules and routines displayed, will all serve to support the learning of children with SEN.

The content of lessons and the range of materials available has also to be considered. Books that include children with disabilities and SEN and give positive images should be used where appropriate, avoiding stereotypes that simply make ‘super heroes’ or ‘victims’ of these groups.
It is essential to create the kind of **classroom which ensures a safe environment for risk taking**, so that children can feel confident in indicating that they do not understand and need help.

The most effective **reward and sanction systems** are those that are clear to all and are differentiated according to different children’s needs. Children understand the need for different ways of dealing with different incidents. They understand that some children need more support. They do not understand unfairness. Children with SEN can sometimes become victims of rigid reward systems based on attainment (length of stories, number of correct spellings from a standardised list) or victims of well-meaning, but actually meaningless, reward systems that commend everything for the same child, from a mark on the paper or a paragraph to a page, to sitting in a chair and ‘being nice’. Similarly, children with SEN can experience punishment for things they cannot do (unrealistic work demands, inappropriate adult behavioural demands) or experience no sanction at all when they have clearly carried out a misdemeanour.

The management of **seating and equipment** is important. At times, children will need the opportunity to sit with friends. On other occasions the teacher will take responsibility for ensuring that a particular child is in the correct line of sight and hearing or sits within a defined area, for example, on a cushion so the child feels secure in his own space.

Most of the time **high quality materials** that are produced for all will be ideal, but not having the right materials does compound special educational needs. Sometimes children with SEN may need their own personal number line or their own copy of the ‘Big Book’ so that they can follow the text; they may need comments in their books written in a dark colour or in large print so that there is meaningful feedback. They may need writing frames, counting equipment, place value cards, key word lists, number fact cards and other available scaffolds. Lost pencils or erasers can all distract from the learning activity so where these things are consistently available, learning can more effectively take place.

Most children are quite happy with the idea that different children need different things at different times to help them learn and often borrow or use that equipment when they need it. There is often resistance on the part of adults to give **additional equipment**, just in case it singles a child out and results in segregation. This is a sensitive issue but few children refuse equipment when they understand that it will help support their learning.

Teachers need to be sensitive about the use of **specialised equipment** that has been provided for the child such as raised boards, standing frames, specialised seating, additional ICT. These are provided as access strategies for learning, to minimise discomfort and in some cases to prevent a particular condition from deteriorating. They may also give the child certain feelings of security. They are therefore important. However, these pieces of equipment can be excluding from some of the social aspects of learning, as they are large. In negotiating with the child and parents/carers, reasonable and pragmatic decisions have to be taken that ensure that therapeutic needs, academic learning and social learning can all be addressed.
Suggested activities

Consider your own classroom and the child whom you regard as having the most complex or severe special needs.

- How is the child’s work valued by all?
- How is the child rewarded?
- How are sanctions applied to this child?

Consider how different strengths and weaknesses are understood by the rest of the class.

- What language might they use?
- What explanations would they have for some children needing more support or experiencing more difficulty?
- Ask them, and if necessary, take some action so that the children use appropriate language to talk about difference, diversity and, if appropriate, special educational needs and disability.

Ask an additional adult to give you feedback on a specific aspect you would like to reflect upon, for example, your use of differentiated praise or your questioning.

Consider whether there are improvements to your classroom environment that might support the learning of all. For example, would a personal number line support some, a key words mat or using mind-mapping to record ideas support others? Might the establishment of a role-play area support the kinaesthetic learners in reading, or a quiet area be a welcome addition for children who find it difficult to cope with groups or those who want to concentrate on a task? Implement the change and monitor its use and impact on learning. Share your change of practice with your colleagues.
The conditions for learning

Consider your existing rules, routines, rewards and sanctions. Check whether you actually use them and whether they work. Have some of them become barriers to and distractions from learning? Evaluate some of them with the children, particularly children who might find them most difficult to understand or comply with. Make changes, monitor the impact and share your changes with colleagues.

Are there times when certain children are not included in class activities? Are there changes to your routine that would avoid this, while still recognising that there will be times when the child may need to be withdrawn for short periods for a particular purpose?
Creating a learning culture

Classroom, community, collaborative and personalised learning

Learning and teaching in a variety of contexts

Learning and teaching in the classroom can be enhanced for all children by the adoption of inclusive teaching strategies. The checklist on pages 39–42 lists some of these and you may find this checklist helpful in reviewing practice. The checklist contains many examples of practices that teachers use intuitively as they aid the learning of all children. It lists particular access strategies for children with SEN. There is no expectation that all the strategies on the checklist should be in place in any one class or lesson: the important point is the match of strategies to the class profile and learning objective.

For many children with SEN written recording presents a particular barrier to learning. For these children it is important to plan alternative ways in which they can record their thinking or record their learning in assessments. The chart on pages 43 illustrates some of these opportunities.

Video sequence

The video sequence that accompanies this section is called ‘Inclusive teaching 1’. It is a Year 3 mathematics lesson. The class are working on the measurement of mass, estimating and measuring using suitable units. In the lesson the teacher uses a number of inclusive teaching strategies. During the main teaching activity he works with a group of children who have SEN. One other group is supported by a teaching assistant and other children in the class work independently.

In particular the sequence highlights:

- inclusive teaching strategies;
- tracking back to identify appropriate objectives for children with SEN.
Suggested activities

Use the inclusive teaching checklist on pages 39–42 of this booklet to evaluate your own teaching or ask others to observe you and provide feedback. Decide which practices you want to enhance and those you might want to introduce. Decide on areas where you have effective practice that you might share with others, to support their development.

Introduce alternative methods of recording, such as those suggested on the chart on page 43 of this booklet, on a more regular basis. Ask the children what impact this had on their learning.

Diverse learning needs and diverse teaching approaches

There is increasing evidence that attention to learning styles – how children learn – and adapting the environment accordingly is an effective way of differentiating the learning objective and improving learning for children with SEN.

We know that some children may be more visual, auditory or kinaesthetic in their learning style. We know that children learn best when using their preferred style although they need opportunities to use and develop other styles. We also know that children with SEN find it difficult to adapt their learning style to that of the teacher if it is different, while more able learners adapt more easily. Through assessment teachers will know the learning styles of their children and will be able to incorporate this information into their planning. It is also helpful to work with children, so that where possible they are aware of their own styles and strengths.

Video sequence

The video clip that accompanies this section is called ‘Inclusive teaching 2’. In the clip a teacher of a Year 2 class talks about a technique that allows children to imagine what they feel, see, hear or touch when they enter the world suggested by the text. The teacher also demonstrates a method of checking understanding and offering further explanation through peer support.

In particular the sequence highlights:

- a method of working with different learning styles;
- a method of checking understanding;
- using partner work to support learning;
- the use of interactive teaching strategies.
Suggested activity

Teach up to three different lessons that you have planned with a different type of learner in mind: visual, auditory, kinaesthetic. Assess the learning of the children through observation, discussion and/or the evidence from their work. Consider how learning styles might influence future planning both for the whole class, for small groups, and for particular individuals with SEN.
Working independently and in groups

All children need opportunities to work alone and to work with others in small and large groups. The way in which the school staff manage these opportunities is fundamental to the learning and social relationships of children with SEN.

All children need to learn the skills of working independently. Teaching children with special educational needs to acquire the skills of working independently is likely to be the most powerful contribution you can make to their future success in school.

Children will need to be actively taught core routines for certain tasks, practising them with progressively less help until they can quickly tell you and show you what they have to do if you ask them to undertake that type of task. They need to be given independent tasks that have previously been modelled for them.

They will need very clear guidelines: ‘I expect you to have produced at least three lines by ten past ten; I will be asking you then to share these with your writing partner.’ Visual prompts in the form of pictorial task cards will help, as will support in the form of writing frames, word mats, relevant classroom displays and prompts such as a card with ideas for ‘Five things to do if you are stuck with your work’.

Collaborative learning is known to enhance achievement. Working with others encourages the use of higher-level thinking skills, particularly meta-cognitive skills when children think about their own learning. Working with others challenges children to listen, to consider one another’s viewpoint and to develop their own viewpoint further. Children who can work effectively together develop adaptability, patience and communication skills including the ability to describe their ideas and defend them, a willingness to share, as well as the ability to guide and support others. Moving between different social and work groups is an important skill that children will need in adult life. Collaborative learning also reduces the demands on teachers, reducing the need for individualised learning programmes and using the children themselves as a support and a resource for each other. When working with others, the child with SEN has the opportunity to watch and listen to other models, alternative explanations and ways of solving problems, giving them many more routes to learning.

As we know, collaborative learning will not take place simply by sitting children together around a table. All children will need to be helped to develop the skills of, for example, turn taking, contributing ideas, making predictions, adopting roles and negotiating disagreements. With support, young children and many pupils with severe and/or complex needs can begin to develop these skills.

The teacher has a range of options depending on the learning and teaching objectives. Group discussion and interaction – making it work in the classroom, part of the Primary National Strategy/QCA guidance Speaking, Listening and Learning: working with children in Key Stages 1 and 2 (DfES 0624-2003), gives some helpful and practical advice about different ways of grouping children, for example, rainbowing and jigsawing.
There is clear evidence that children of below average ability learn more effectively in mixed ability groups. Recent studies by the National Foundation for Educational Research and the National Institute of Economic and Social Research have shown positive effects for those who are felt to be of average and above average ability. Through contributing to mixed ability groups a child with SEN has the opportunity to express their own viewpoint and share with others the approaches they use to solve problems. Children will also learn by being present within the group, listening and observing.

To avoid common pitfalls such as dominant children taking over in mixed ability groups, it is helpful to plan the group’s make-up and consider the strengths and weaknesses of individual children and the roles that they might play. Groups where every child has an important role to play in the success of the group ensure that the child with SEN is not marginalised. Children can be asked to prepare for work in a group by first working as a pair or preparing with an adult supporter.

The teacher also has the options of using friendship groups (chosen by the children themselves), random groups or personal interest groups. These give the opportunity for children to make different relationships or build on their strengths or shared goals. Working in this way values the child with SEN as a child who for example, speaks Urdu, is interested in dinosaurs, is good at drawing, is a good friend of Zara and so on.

Ability grouping has its place for particular purposes. It can make planning and differentiation easier and children with similar needs can work on similar objectives, targeting specific skills. It may also be a good method of targeting additional adult time. In these cases children with special educational needs are likely to receive additional help through a differentiated task or adult support.

Ability grouping can also have detrimental effects on children with SEN. Ability groupings can be so blunt that they do not recognise strengths and weaknesses of individual children between subjects – so children are assigned to the same group be it literacy, mathematics or art. If the ‘lower-ability’ group also contains children who are able but underachieving because they are disaffected or disruptive this means that the behaviour models are not appropriate and the learning targets will not be similar. Groups of lower-attaining children are also less likely to provide each other with the range of language models and knowledge that will help them to progress.

Children tend to be very perceptive about the purpose of groups whether they are labelled ‘Slytherin, Griffindor and Hufflepuff’, or ‘Clever Children, Middle Children and Special Educational Needs Children’. It is not the grouping per se that is significant but what is communicated by the grouping, for example, what is actually valued by the teacher such as high academic attainment.

Where a child with severe learning difficulties is provided with one-to-one support or is working on learning objectives that are related to but developmentally very different
from the work of the rest of the class, some teachers have found it helpful to place this child with a group of children of high ability where behaviour and language models may be more positive.

Many teachers use paired work. Pairs take some of the risk out of individual learning and develop a shared ownership of learning or of a social relationship and an opportunity to test ideas out with a safe audience. Pairs can be organised by ability, interest, language need or gender. The options for paired work are usually ‘think–pair–share’, snowballing, or pairs working on different aspects of subjects.

Whether or not to withdraw children from the classroom environment has often caused some debate. It is desirable that most learning takes place in the social context of the classroom, where it can be learned and then generalised. However, there are times that the learning needs of the children demand a different environment.

Both withdrawal and in-class support have advantages and disadvantages. For a small group that is withdrawn, the environment may well be quiet and private. Children are able to form close relationships and there is some evidence that the children are able to concentrate more effectively and cover more ground. With in-class support there is, however, less of a risk that the support becomes detached from the curriculum in the class, learning problems can be dealt with as they arise in a real situation, children remain with their friends and the responsibility for children remains firmly shared between two adults.

Before deciding which option to take, you need to consider the learning intention for the child and group and the child’s needs. If, for example, a phonics learning intention is about mastering skills of segmenting and blending phonemes, and the child has a hearing impairment or speech and language difficulty, it may be sensible to teach the skills, during this part of the lesson, in a quiet environment outside the class. If the learning intention is for the child to apply learned phonic skills to a shared text, support in the classroom during whole-class work will be more appropriate in terms of taking forward academic and social learning. Whether or not to withdraw a child must be part of an ongoing decision-making process which involves thinking carefully about the objectives of each part of the lesson.
For withdrawal groups to be effective they must contain the elements of good class teaching. Attention must be given to the clarity of the learning objectives, the subject knowledge of the adult, the pace and the resources used and close liaison between the class teacher and additional adult.

**Partnership working with additional adults** will improve children’s learning if it is well managed. With necessary preparation and planning the additional adult can:

- ensure access (for example, by simplifying or translating the teacher’s language, helping a child formulate answers to questions, helping a child to use resources, signing or scribing);
- sit close to children who need support and give them focused help (for example, reminding child of previously learned strategies, encouraging use of correct language);
- work with children to prepare them to answer a question the teacher has given them time to think about;
- provide images, pictures and tactile, practical resources to help children’s understanding;
- provide appropriate praise and encouragement;
- support children with behaviour difficulties, for example, helping to settle and involve them, and keep attention directed to the task;
- observe individual children for assessment purposes;
- monitor progress of the class or individuals on behaviour targets;
- go over the teaching in an earlier part of the lesson, giving time for more explanation and examples, and for children to explain their thinking to others;
- support work on teacher-planned differentiated tasks;
- ensure access to resources children may need in order to understand what is being taught;
- work on a structured programme;
- pre-tutor for future whole-class work or the plenary;
- coach behaviour and group-work skills;
- supervise the class while a teacher works with a particular group.

While the key is teamwork, it is important that the class teacher retains ownership of the child’s learning. There should be strategies in place to:

- reduce the risk of over-dependency (for example, planning times for the child to work unsupported or supported by peers, ensuring that the additional adult also works with other children);
- consider whether the additional adult support is enabling interaction between the child and his or her peers, or whether is it inadvertently acting as a barrier to such interactions;
- ensure the support does not sometimes embarrass the pupil;
- enable the additional adult to gain sufficient knowledge of the relevant aspect of the subject to promote children’s learning (for example, explaining concepts, tackling misconceptions, asking challenging questions, making connections with previous learning);
ensure that the additional adult understands what the learning objective means in terms of learning outcomes, is aware of the images and models that can be used to support the child's understanding and is able to identify progress in the subject and so know when to move the child's learning on.

Video sequence

The video sequence that accompanies this section is called ‘Collaborative learning’. In the sequence you will see two teachers talking about collaborative work that they have developed in the particularly challenging context of their school. They talk about the benefits to all children of working in groups.

Suggested activities

Think about a child with special educational needs. How do you ensure that this child has a range of opportunities to work with different children, for example, as part of a friendship group, as part of an interest group, with a teacher, independently and so on? Share your strategies with your colleagues. Agree to try out other strategies that might enhance the learning opportunities for this particular individual. Report back on the impact on learning.

Look at the guidance on Group discussion and interaction – making it work in the classroom, in the Primary National Strategy pack Speaking, Listening and Learning: working with children in Key Stages 1 and 2 (DfES 0624-2003). Teach the children the skills they need to participate in, for example, rainbowing, jigsawing and so on. Try these strategies out and monitor the learning.

Do you know about the learning that takes place when a child is withdrawn from your classroom? If not, establish ways of finding out and celebrating with the whole class.

Reflect on the way you work with additional adults. Are there areas you would like to improve? Ask the additional adult about their particular skills and interests. Could these be incorporated into your planning?
Additional approaches for children with severe and/or complex needs

Some children will have needs that will require additional consideration and provision in the classroom.

For many children with learning difficulties there is some developmental delay. This means that effective learning may take place in a more active, play-related way. These children may also have not been able to gain full benefit from early opportunities to learn in this way, at the time when they were on offer. Whatever their key stage or chronological year group, therefore, these children need opportunities to revisit and learn through the use of play, role-play, sand and water, picture books and concrete materials. Best inclusive practice considers how children can access these opportunities in all classrooms.

Children with SEN need opportunities to generalise and make real their learning. They will need a balance of adult-directed and independent work. They also need the opportunity to explore at an age appropriate and a developmental level. The class library needs to contain a full range of books so that children’s reading age, chronological age and interest can be catered for. The pencil pot needs to contain big pencils, small pencils, pencil grips, pens, felt tips.

For all children, in order for learning to take place, there has to be a balance of the familiar and ‘safe’ and the unknown and the new challenge. For some children with complex and/or severe needs this balance needs to be very carefully managed. In order to learn, some children will need an environment that can be predicted and uses everyday materials that are familiar to the child as the learning resources. It will be necessary to provide frequent repetitions of the same experience in a variety of settings. It may be that the same learning experience will need to take place in different settings, with different people, in order to be generalised. Assessment may need to recognise the learning processes of attention, reaction, anticipation or joining in. The publication Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for learning difficulties (QCA/01/736) provides more information on these learning processes.

Some children with complex and/or severe needs may need to visit some of the earliest sensory experiences in order to access learning. Others will need concrete apparatus to manipulate before they are able to use abstract pictures or words. Some need concrete materials in order to stimulate appropriate language. Care must be taken that inappropriate materials are not used. A child of ten who needs to revisit early sensory experiences requires age-appropriate materials, just as a nine-year-old who cannot read needs reading material matched to their interest level. Both of these learners have many social experiences that demand that materials used are as age-appropriate as possible.

In order to access learning, some children will need specialised resources or techniques. The written word supplemented by symbols makes literacy more
accessible to some children and can be an important developmental stage that scaffolds learning to read. Supporting spoken language by gesture or a signing system can enable children to develop their expressive and receptive language. These skills and techniques, which initially you may need support to develop, will undoubtedly enhance the learning opportunities for all children when introduced into your classroom.

Some children will have **specific and identified needs** that carry a label such as autistic spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy and so on. What all these children have in common is that they are all different and so are their needs. Undoubtedly, there are common threads in the use of terms that will give you an insight into the learning characteristics and needs of a child, for example, who has autistic spectrum disorder. Investigation, reading and engagement with other professionals will inform you of these. The inclusive teaching strategies described above will help overcome many of the barriers these children experience. But it is also necessary to remember that every child is different, even those with the same diagnostic label. It is only by knowing the child and your context that the additional information about a specific disability will be useful to you. Children with identified disabilities and needs, like the rest of the population, will have different learning styles, be able and skilled in certain things and find others very difficult, will have different life experiences, will have different social, emotional and personal needs. It is your skill as a teacher (perhaps working with others) that will put the knowledge of the child and knowledge of their needs and disability together into your context and curriculum and ensure that the child is able to progress and achieve.

Some children may have particular **personal or health needs** in addition to their special educational needs. You will receive advice from the child, the parent/carer or a health professional. As well as managing your classroom to cater for these needs (for example, enabling a child to visit the toilet more frequently), you will need to consider whether there are any possible implications for learning and teaching. Some children tire easily; certain positions, for example, in a standing frame, may be less comfortable for the child when engaging in certain activities, and therefore good position needs to be established before learning can take place. Some children experience pain and discomfort that will clearly affect their motivation. A child’s medication may mean that they learn best at certain times of the day and need other activities at other times. If you are unsure, ask for help and carry out some assessment (observation or discussion) that may lead to some future problem solving.

**Video sequence**

The video sequence that accompanies this section is called ‘Additional approaches for pupils with severe and/or complex special educational needs’. In one sequence you will see a teacher working with a Year 4 group in a science lesson. This was one of a series of lessons on materials and their properties where the children learned about the changes that occur when materials are heated or cooled, that temperature is a measure of how hot or cold things are and that some materials are better thermal insulators than others.
The group contains a number of learners who have SEN, including a child who has profound and multiple learning difficulties. The teacher uses the lesson and equipment to provide opportunities for that pupil to explore, through sensory experience, materials that change when heated or cooled. The lesson is also an opportunity for this particular pupil to experience being part of a group supported by a familiar adult in a familiar environment. The sensory opportunities offered to the pupil support and scaffold the learning of many other children in the classroom.

Other video clips illustrate the other measures the school has put in place to support children with severe learning difficulties.

Suggested activities

Teach your next sequence of literacy, mathematics, history or geography lessons ensuring that there are concrete materials, artefacts and sensory materials available to support the learning. Monitor the impact.

Find out about some of the additional techniques that might support learners with particular needs or disabilities in your classroom. Ask parents/carers, the child or other professionals for support in suggesting information from the Internet, books or their own experience. Share your learning with any additional adult working in your classroom or other colleagues. Incorporate one of the suggested techniques and monitor its impact.
Where to find out more

You may want to follow up some of the ideas in these materials. Listed below are some useful readings and websites. Your LEA school improvement team, SEN Adviser, SEN support services and local special schools will also be able to help.

**General**

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/literacy/communities/inclusion/
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/numeracy/communities/inclusion/
www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/

**Inclusive teaching**

*Including all children in the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson*
DfES 0465/2002
SENCO Training Pack DfES 0256/2002
*Supporting pupils with special educational needs in the literacy hour*
DfES 0101/2000
*Guidance to support pupils with specific needs in the daily mathematics lesson*
DfES 0545/2001
*Speaking, Listening and Learning: working with children in Key Stages 1 and 2*
DfES 0623-2003G
*Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties*
QCA/01/736 www.nc.uk.net/ld.

**Collaborative learning**

*Understanding differentiation*, by Sylvia McNamara and Gill Moreton (David Fulton, 1998)
*Effective Pupil Grouping in the Primary School: A Practical Guide*, by Susan Hallam, Judith Ireson and Jane Davies (David Fulton, 2002)

**Signs, symbols and visual timetables**

*Pupils with complex learning difficulties: promoting learning using visual materials and methods*, by Jill Porter and Rob Ashdown (NASEN, 2002)

**Involving children**

*Working together: Giving children and young people a say: draft guidance*
DfES 0492/2003

*Having a say, making a change: a CD-ROM resource produced by a group of educational psychologists which aims to enable children with special educational needs to have a real say in determining, making sense of, and reviewing the provision and support they experience* (NASEN)
Learning Styles
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/thinkingskills/

The ALPS Approach: Accelerated Learning in Primary Schools, by Alistair Smith and Nicola Call (Network Educational Press, 1999)

The ALPS Approach Resource Book for Teachers, by Alistair Smith and Nicola Call (Network Educational Press, 1999)
## Inclusive teaching strategies

### Whole-class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to teacher and any resources used has been planned for, e.g. a number line or grid or text visible to all or made accessible in other ways, background noise avoided where possible, light source in front of teacher not behind</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children’s seating carefully planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules and routines for the lesson taught and displayed; praise for the children keeping the rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All children clear about objectives of lesson</td>
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<tr>
<td>All children clear about structure of lesson and day, e.g. visual timetables are on display</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New or difficult vocabulary clarified, written up, displayed, revisited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher checks for understanding of instructions, e.g. by asking a child to explain them in their own words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support in place for children who cannot ‘hold things in their heads’ – sticky notes, jottings, individual whiteboards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions pitched so as to challenge children at all levels, e.g. define paragraph (for higher attaining), define sentence (for lower attaining)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals targeted for particular questions, e.g. one child to add 24 to 52, a less able child to then add 25 to 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use made of alternatives to questions to invite a response, e.g. making suggestions from which the children can choose, speculating, making a personal contribution from own experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions used to ensure the rest of the class are listening, e.g. ‘Does anyone have a question for Gupta?’ ‘Who thinks the same as Jo?’ ‘Who thinks differently?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children clear about the timescale for the question, e.g. ‘This is one for a quick response.’ ‘This is one which needs several minutes to think about.’ ‘This is one I want you to work at for ten minutes.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time and support given before responses are required, e.g. personal thinking time, partner talk, persisting with progressively more scaffolding until child can answer correctly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribution of all children valued – secure and supportive learning environment where there is the safety to have a go, to make a mistake</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children help and support each other with ideas; they give one another space in which to think and respond to questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions reflected back by teacher in expanded form or expanded on by other children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-sensory teaching approaches (visual, verbal, kinaesthetic) in use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time out (talking in pairs or other groups) used to maintain attention, link to children’s own language and experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddying used for seating and paired or partner work, e.g. more settled child paired with a child who finds concentration difficult, more able with less able</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interactive strategies used, e.g. children having cards to hold up or own whiteboards or coming to the front to take a role</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual and tangible aids used, e.g. story sacks, real objects, signs and symbols, photographs, pegs on a coathanger, variety of number lines, counting sticks, computer animations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies which children need to use (e.g. for problem solving or text composition) made very explicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract concepts made concrete, e.g. word problems in mathematics turned into pictures or acted out or modelled with resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children who need it being pre-prepared or pre-tutored where this would help them to access the lesson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional adults, if present, are actively involved throughout in supporting or assessing learning</td>
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### Independent and Group Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transition from whole-class work to independent and group work clearly signalled and actively managed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks clearly explained or modelled – checks for understanding, task cards or boards as reminders, time available and expected outcomes made clear</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children’s different needs for explanation are recognised: children can choose to start if they feel they understand or wait for further explanation if they do not</td>
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<tr>
<td>Materials and resources for task available and accessible; expectations about independent personal organisation are clear and routines have been taught</td>
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<tr>
<td>A distraction-free area has been set up for children who need it to work in</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children have been taught strategies which mean they can continue to work without direct teacher help if they get stuck; prompts to remind them are on display</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children are provided with and regularly reminded of resources to help them be independent, e.g. relevant material from whole class session kept on display, word lists or mats, dictionaries of terms, glossaries, number lines, hundred squares, tables squares</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tasks link back to earlier (or later) objectives where these are appropriate for child and group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks simplified or extended, e.g. short, concrete text used by one group or long, abstract text by another, numbers to 100 by one group or to 20 by another</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tasks made more open or more closed according to children’s needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrangements (buddying, adult support, taping) made where necessary to ensure that children can access written text and instructions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternatives to paper and pencil tasks used where appropriate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scaffolding (e.g. problem solving grids or writing frames or clue cards) provided where needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variety of pupil groupings used so that children are able to draw on each other’s strengths and skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children taught to work together in groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appropriate behaviour is noticed, praised or rewarded</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective use of additional adult support, e.g. learning objectives clear, independence rather than dependence promoted, peer interaction encouraged</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective use of ICT as an access strategy, e.g. speech or sign supported software, on-screen word banks, predictive word processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual’s learning objectives, e.g. positional language, number facts, punctuation, prediction are picked up on</td>
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<tr>
<td>Texts and equipment are at children’s instructional level and matched to their age and dignity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching assistants used to prepare some children for the whole-class teaching ahead of time by rehearsing feedback, thinking in advance about the questions the teacher will ask before they are put to the class as a whole</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peers helped to give feedback in positive ways, e.g. ‘I like the way…’ ‘One idea for improvement would be…’ cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning designed to assess grasp of particular objectives relevant for each child or group of children</td>
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