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**C**  **NNNECT**

MARCH 2020 / ISSUE 20

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# HIGH ASPIRATIONS FOR ALL

Exploring DME and neurodiversity



## Promoting inclusion

A developed approach to early intervention and the promotion of inclusion

## Teaching handwriting

Four things to consider when teaching handwriting

## Cyber safety

A look at the latest Cybersurvey report findings

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“I’m an asset.  
Not a problem.”

Georgia, autistic young person



# Welcome

# #20

By Professor Adam Boddison, Chief Executive, nasen

## Welcome to the March 2020 edition of *nasen Connect*.

# W

As we progress through the new decade and think about where it may take us, it can be useful to reflect on the previous decade and where we have come from. The year 2020 marks the 10-year anniversary of two important events that have shaped and informed SEND provision today.

The first is the Equality Act 2010, which reinforced the duties placed on schools and local authorities to provide reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND. Ten years on, reasonable adjustments are not yet consistently in place for pupils with SEND across our education system. One of the issues we need to overcome as a sector is that reasonable adjustments can sometimes be thought of as only applicable in the context of disability, rather than for SEN more broadly. Some schools in England display sheer excellence in their approach to reasonable adjustments and, moving forwards, we want to be able to say this about every school.

The second is the 2010 report 'A statement is not enough', published by the education inspectorate Ofsted. The following appears in the executive summary: *"...despite extensive statutory guidance, the consistency of the identification of special educational needs varied widely, not only between different local areas but also within them. Children and young people with similar needs were not being treated equitably and appropriately: the parental perception of inconsistency in this respect is well-founded. Across education, health services and social care, assessments were different and the thresholds for securing additional support were at widely varying levels. In some of the individual cases that inspectors saw, repeated and different assessments were a time-consuming obstacle to progress rather than a way for effective support to be provided."*

The sad news is that too many people would argue that this reflects some of the current challenges still being faced by the system today.

Later this year, nasen will be launching its new ten-year strategy and I look forward to sharing how, for every year over the next decade, nasen will make a difference for children and young people with SEND.



nasen will make a difference for children and young people with SEND.

*Adam Boddison*

Follow Adam on Twitter: @AdamBoddison



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**Later this year, nasen will be launching its new 10-year strategy and I look forward to sharing how for every year over the next decade, nasen will make a difference for children and young people with SEND.**  
PROFESSOR ADAM BODDISON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, NASEN



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**YOUR MONTHLY EMAIL BULLETIN TELLS YOU YOUR LEVEL OF MEMBERSHIP**

# Membership Focus

## Welcome to March's Membership Focus.

**W**e would like to start this month by thanking all our renewing members for committing to another year of membership with us. Your support is truly invaluable as we strive to promote the advancement and development of all individuals with learning differences.

You may remember our recent membership consultation survey which promised to provide one participant with a brand new Apple iPad; we can confirm that the lucky winner, who was picked at random, is Vicky Evans. We'd like again to say a huge thank you to all our participating members and we'll be sure to bring you other exciting competitions that you will be able to enter throughout 2020.

New for this month is a brand new resource, available exclusively for Silver and Gold members. 'Supporting SEND - Observing Learners' aims to support education professionals in using a variety of observation techniques when observing young people of all ages. By using this resource, you will gain a wider knowledge of a range of observation techniques to provide a foundation for assessment. It's available



**Your support is truly invaluable as we strive to promote the advancement and development of all individuals with learning differences.**



now on the nasen website; simply log in to your account and download it today!

If you haven't, already, now really is a great time to reserve your tickets for nasen Live 2020. We have an incredibly exciting show lined up for delegates, with a host of sector-leading speakers and exhibitors to see. If you haven't already, why not go for Gold? Upgrade your account to Gold and receive up to three free tickets for the event! Contact the membership team today to upgrade your account and get access to this must-visit show!

If you have any further membership questions, please do not hesitate to contact us directly at [membership@nasen.org.uk](mailto:membership@nasen.org.uk)

We look forward to working together throughout 2020 and sincerely appreciate your support.

Kind regards,  
The Membership Team



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# Have your say...

We would love to hear from you so please send any comments or 'letters' to [nasenconnect@nasen.org.uk](mailto:nasenconnect@nasen.org.uk). In case your letter is chosen for publication, please do include your name and setting.

Don't forget, you can 'Have Your Say' via Facebook and Twitter too.

 [nasenconnect@nasen.org.uk](mailto:nasenconnect@nasen.org.uk)  01827 311500  @nasen\_org  search: @nasen.org

Have Your Say gives you, the reader, a forum to share your thoughts and opinions about current issues in the world of education and SEND. It is also the place to share your reactions to, and thoughts about, what you have read in previous editions of *nasen Connect*.



## Mental Health Awareness is a must

I lead a busy SEND hub in an inner-city secondary school and I am coming across increasing numbers of students with mental health issues. I found the article in your January edition of *nasen Connect* food for thought and have already decided to make some changes in school. I have set up an informal space with sofas, cushions and a couple of big plants, where students can talk about their feelings to people who are happy to listen. I have a meeting planned with SLT to discuss ways to instil mental health into everyday teaching and the new curriculum we are developing for Key Stage 3. I am also hoping to work with the art department to design some wellbeing boards around the school.

**Secondary SENCO, Birmingham**

Editor: Wow, you have been busy. Seriously, with 10 per cent of children and young people aged 5-16 having a clinically diagnosed mental health difficulty, we must make mental health a priority in our schools and making small changes can have major effects on pupil mental wellbeing.

## nasen Early Years course spot on

I attended one of the nasen Early Years half-day courses in Derby before Christmas and I had to write to you to say it was absolutely fantastic. As a childminder I haven't had the opportunity to attend training in SEND and I learned so much about the four Broad Areas of Need in one morning! The course was spot on and I have now registered as a Bronze member. Thank you nasen.

**Childminder, Derby**

Editor: I'm pleased that you found the course useful. Remember to log on to the nasen website regularly and look out for further events, training and resources.



## We're there for you

In these times of Local Authority (LA) cutbacks and schools watching the purse strings, we must find creative ways of making budgets go further and seek support, ideas and resources from additional sources rather than relying on the LA for this, as we have done in the past. Our school has just taken out organisational Silver membership of nasen which works out at roughly £13 a month and has benefited everyone in some way. I would strongly recommend it.

**Primary SENCO, Northants**

Editor: I'm glad your school is making the most of its organisational membership. The updated nasen website is packed full of downloadable resources and the latest SEND updates. You might like to consider signing up as a member of the Whole School SEND Community of Practice on the SEND Gateway too, which will widen your SEND network within your region and offer you further support and information.



# nasen Live 2020

Friday, 3 July, 9.30am – 4.30pm – Vox Conference Centre, Birmingham

With just four months to go until our annual SEND Conference, nasen Live, we are excited to confirm more details and information about what delegates can expect at the one-day SEND conference this summer.

## CONFIRMED SPEAKERS\*

### EMMA KNIGHTS, OBE (NATIONAL GOVERNANCE ASSOCIATION)

Emma is Chief Executive of the National Governance Association (NGA). Emma has written on a wide range of topics and is co-author of the NGA's Chair's Handbook. Emma is founding trustee of the Foundation for Leadership in Education and was awarded an OBE in the 2018 New Year's Honours list for services to education.

### ELIZABETH MURRAY (SPOTLIGHT EDUCATION SUPPORT)

Liz is the Founder of Spotlight Education Support, providing SEND training and consultancy for schools. She is also an experienced Assistant Headteacher and SENCO. Liz regularly presents at training events and publishes articles to share and develop innovative teaching practice for pupils with SEND.

### ALEX MANNERS

Alex, 23, is from Solihull and has Asperger's. He has presented talks about "My Life Living with Asperger's" to many different companies, universities, schools and councils. He also presents his own radio show.

### MARK BLOIS (BROWNE JACOBSON)

Mark is Head of the Education Team at Browne



Jacobson. Mark has more than 20 years' experience as an education lawyer. He is recommended as a leader in his field in the industry bibles *Chambers UK* and *Legal 500*.

**\*Please note that speakers are subject to change and all views expressed are speaker views only.**

## GET YOUR TICKET

Ticket prices for nasen Live start from £149 for nasen members and £199 for non-members.

Ticket prices also include lunch and light refreshments throughout the day.

Our venue has teamed up with Avanti West Coast, to offer you 20 per cent off advanced travel tickets for the day. Simply visit [www.avantiwestcoast.co.uk/nec](http://www.avantiwestcoast.co.uk/nec)

## GOLD MEMBERS GO FREE

Don't forget – Gold members can attend free, and if you have an organisational Gold membership with nasen, you can even turn it into a team day out, with access to three tickets per organisation!

Not a Gold member? Don't worry, it's really simple to upgrade your membership. Call one of our recruitment administrators today on 01827 311500 or email [membership@nasen.org.uk](mailto:membership@nasen.org.uk)

## CONFIRMED EXHIBITORS

- Axcis
- GL Assessment
- Nisai Group
- Edukey
- Equals
- GCSEPod
- IDL
- Mighty Writer
- Pentagon Plan
- Nessy
- Ruskin Mill Trust
- Scanning Pens
- School Improvement Liverpool
- SEN Books
- Young Epilepsy

## BECOME AN EXHIBITOR

Reach hundreds of delegates and promote your business at nasen Live 2020. Stands are still available and start from just £500. Contact [sales@nasen.org.uk](mailto:sales@nasen.org.uk) for more information.



+ For more information about the event, visit [www.nasen.org.uk/nasenlive](http://www.nasen.org.uk/nasenlive)



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*“Leaders and managers have successfully achieved their vision to provide online learning to students who otherwise would be unable to participate in education.”*

OFSTED, Dec 2017

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# The nasen Awards are back!

16 OCTOBER 2020, WALDORF HILTON HOTEL, LONDON

nasen is committed to supporting thousands of SEND practitioners, both nationally and internationally, enabling them to meet all pupils' needs and help them to reach their full potential. We are delighted to announce that, once again, this autumn we will host the nasen Awards. The nasen Awards aim to recognise and reward those people whose actions make a real difference to the lives of children and young people with SEND.

**There will be 13 awards up for grabs this year, and nominations are set to open week commencing 20 April 2020.**

1. The Innovation Award for Technology
2. The David Ryan Publication Award 2020
3. The nasen Award for International Provision (NEW for 2020)
4. The nasen Award for Early Years Provision
5. The nasen Award for Primary Provision – sponsored by GL Assessment
6. The nasen Award for Secondary Provision – sponsored by Nisai
7. The nasen Award for Post 16-25 Provision – sponsored by Ambitious about Autism
8. Provision of the Year – sponsored by Axcis
9. The nasen Award for Co-production with Children and Young People and their Families
10. Young person/Youth (up to 25 years) Achievement Award – sponsored by Thrive
11. nasen Teacher of the Year Award
12. SEND Leader of the Year Award – sponsored by NEU
13. Learning Support Staff of the Year Award

★ Those shortlisted for an award will be invited to the ceremony, which is due to take place on 16 October at The Waldorf Hilton Hotel, London.

➕ **For more information, please visit**  
[www.nasen.org.uk/awards](http://www.nasen.org.uk/awards)



## Could you sponsor the nasen Awards 2020?

We have lots of powerful sponsorship opportunities available for our nasen Awards this autumn, including category and table sponsorship.

So if you're looking to further support the SEND sector, contact a member of the team today at [sales@nasen.org.uk](mailto:sales@nasen.org.uk)



# Sector Update

ALL THE LATEST NEWS FROM ACROSS SEND

✉ [nasenconnect@nasen.org.uk](mailto:nasenconnect@nasen.org.uk) ☎ 01827 311500 🐦 @nasen\_org 📘 search: @nasen.org



## SEND funding to be discussed at Stormont

There were a number of urgent issues for ministers newly appointed to the Northern Ireland Executive in Stormont in January. Peter Weir, previously Education Secretary from May 2016 to January 2017, has been confirmed as the Minister for Education.

Among other issues, he is tasked with overseeing promised reforms of the way schools are funded, of support for children with special educational needs and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as the system itself.

### NEURODIVERSITY CELEBRATION WEEK

Neurodiversity Celebration Week will take place from 16 – 22 March this year. The campaign aims to create a more positive attitude towards neurodiversity and to change perceptions of special educational needs and disabilities to enable students to have positive school experiences. Schools can register to take part and access a variety of resources and suggested activities at <https://bit.ly/3aexZOL>



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nc

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### > IMPORTANT SENSORY INFORMATION RELEASED

The Council for Disabled Children has created an information sheet explaining the different approaches and interventions that can be used with children and adults with sensory differences. The information sheet can be downloaded at <https://bit.ly/2f9ohMS>

#### > HELPING PARENTS TO ACCESS IASS

The Information, Advice and Support Services Network has created a leaflet for professionals to help them support families to access information, advice and support services. Although produced specifically for professionals in the London Borough of Bromley, the leaflet contains useful general information: <https://bit.ly/35ProqI>



## Ofsted is overlooking pupils with SEND, research shows

Recently, nasen funded research, carried out by the Driver Youth Trust, to investigate whether Ofsted's new inspection framework suitably supports learners with SEND.

The results of the research, which looked at 766 inspection reports, highlights the omission of pupils with SEND, for example, "16 reports do not mention SEND at all. In these reports – one Outstanding, two Requires Improvement (RI), and 13 Good – no comment is made about SEND provision. Ofsted should ensure that provision for these pupils is being addressed consistently well across all reports."

Karen Wespieser, Director of Operations at Driver Youth Trust, said: "It is concerning that in more than a dozen of the new reports produced there is no information for parents or school leaders about how a school is providing for children with SEND." Karen has called for schools' overall Ofsted grades to depend partly on the quality of their SEND provision. She found more than 30 reports in which a school was rated as 'Good' despite inspectors raising concerns about the education provided for pupils with SEND.

**+ Read the report at <https://bit.ly/3ar2wss>**

## NCB TO LAUNCH SEND OUTCOMES PROJECT

Disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs are known to have poorer life outcomes than their peers on a wide range of measures.

The National Children's Bureau (NCB) is partnering with the National Centre for Social Research on a new project which seeks to help uncover the causal processes which lead to poorer outcomes, on average, for children and young people with SEN.

These measures include academic attainment, experience of bullying, life satisfaction, employment and involvement in the criminal justice system.

This three-year Department for Education-funded project will have a particular focus on seldom-heard groups of children and young people with SEN, including those who are eligible for free school meals, children from black, Asian and ethnic minorities, Looked After Children and Children in Need.

The project will have a strong element of children and young people's participation within the overall research design, with fieldwork procedures and questionnaire design being guided by NCB's Young Research Advisors (YRAs).

## £14 BILLION EDUCATION INVESTMENT ANNOUNCED

On 10 January 2020, the Prime Minister announced an investment of more than £14 billion in primary and secondary education between now and 2022/23. The funding package for schools with 5-16 year olds includes £2.6 billion for 2020/21, £4.8 billion for 2021/22, and £7.1 billion for 2022/23.

This will bring the schools' budget to £52.2 billion in 2022/23. This delivers on the Prime Minister's pledge when entering Downing Street to increase school funding by £4.6 billion above inflation, levelling up education funding and giving all young people the same opportunities to succeed – regardless of where they grow up.

The deal includes an extra £780 million for children with SEND (2020/21).

**+ Read the full press release at: <https://bit.ly/2uPUrNN>**







## **EDUCATION POLICY** **INSTITUTE REPORT ON** **ACCESS TO CAMHS**

In January 2020, the Education Policy Institute (EPI) published its annual report on access to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).

The study, which examined access to specialist services, waiting times for treatment and provision for the most vulnerable children in England, concluded: "Our newly collected data reinforces the picture of a system that is failing to meet needs across the country, despite significant extra spending on CAMHS since 2015.

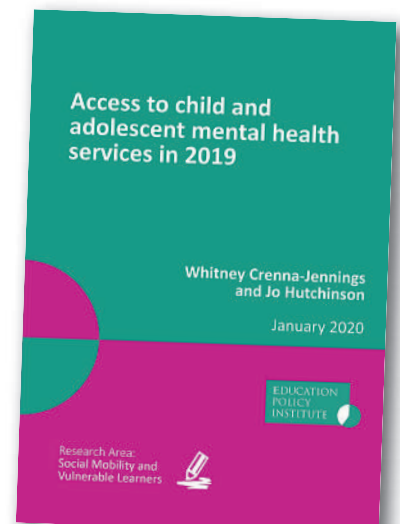
"Waiting times to specialist treatment have fallen but remain twice as long as the government's proposed four-week standard. It remains unclear what support is available for the one in four children with mental health difficulties referred to, but not accepted into, treatment.

"Children with complex or less well-understood needs, including those with conduct difficulties, those in care, and those transitioning to adult mental health services, face a postcode lottery of provision."

It called for a robust system for reporting data on access to CAMHS, including a clear definition of children who are eligible for treatment and a call for the government to "broaden its focus to prevention of mental ill-health, rather than acute intervention once problems are entrenched".

**+ Read the whole report here:**

<https://bit.ly/3at5ugm>



## **SENCO report exposes rising administrative tide impacting support for pupils with SEND**

New research published in January reveals that three-quarters (74 per cent) of SENCOs are being pulled away from supporting pupils with SEND to fulfil overcomplicated administrative demands and unrelated duties during allocated 'SENCO' time.

'The Time is Now: Addressing missed opportunities for Special Education Needs Support and Coordination in our schools', conducted by Bath Spa University and nasen, found that time-consuming Education, Health and Care plan needs assessment requests, and complex paperwork requirements from local authorities, are preventing SENCOs from being able to carry out their role effectively.

A lack of consistency in practice and clarity of processes across LAs was highlighted as a key driver behind the unnecessary weight of administration, as well as moves to leave the profession.

Despite a call for statutory allocation of SENCO time in The National SENCO Workload Survey, published in 2018, only 50 per cent of SENCOs said they had been allocated the same time as the previous year to facilitate the role but also faced more pressure from senior leaders.

Only 17 per cent of SENCOs stated that they had been allocated more dedicated time to carry out their role, in comparison to the previous academic year.

Furthermore, two-thirds (67 per cent) of those allocated 'extra' time, are spending it on administration tasks, instead of supporting children, families and teachers.

**+ Read the full report at**

<https://bit.ly/2ReBThP>







# Changing society for young autistic people

The campaigns team at the National Autistic Society are looking for autistic young people aged 16-21 to lead the way in their fight for change. Prospective participants don't need to have previous campaigning experience or understand lots about politics – just a passion to change society for autistic people.

The programme will last for two years, and Young Ambassadors will meet every two to three months in London for a Saturday afternoon (the NAS will pay travel and lunch expenses). The NAS

also wants Young Ambassadors who will be active online between meetings to work on the issues that are important to the group and to autistic people.

The Young Ambassadors will be supported by the campaigns team, who will help them learn how to campaign and share their experiences with the public. On top of this, the campaigns team at NAS will provide Young Ambassadors with key skills for further education and employment opportunities.

✚ Find out more at: <https://bit.ly/35SQJzF>

## SEND AWARDS AND QUALITY MARKS: TWO NEW PAGES ARE NOW AVAILABLE ON THE SEND GATEWAY

The SEND Awards page showcases awards within the area of SEND and we hope it will inspire teachers and practitioners to take part and nominate individuals and institutions that go above and beyond to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND: <https://bit.ly/2u2UpBz>

The SEND Quality Marks page showcases quality marks that can be gained within the area of SEND. To find out more and to apply for a quality mark to have the high quality of provision that exists in your setting recognised, visit <https://bit.ly/30mBLkz>

✚ If you know of other awards or quality marks not found on the above two pages, email Mandy Wilding at [mandyw@nasen.org.uk](mailto:mandyw@nasen.org.uk)

## OFSTED ANNUAL REPORT'S FOCUS ON SEND

Amanda Spielman, Ofsted's Chief Inspector, launched the Annual Report for 2018/19 on 21 January.

The section on SEND (pp.85 – 90) raises several points:

- ✚ There are problems accessing the right education and support. This is partly due to the increase in the number of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan, 3,500 of whom were waiting for provision (at January 2019);
- ✚ Pupils with SEND are five times more likely to be permanently excluded from mainstream schools than those without SEND; for more than half of these pupils, SEMH was recorded as their primary need at the time of exclusion;
- ✚ Half of the areas inspected in Local Area SEND Inspections have been required to produce a written statement of action. This picture is particularly poor in unitary authorities and metropolitan districts. Weak features in areas with a written statement of action include joint commissioning, the health component of EHCPs, the local offer, and co-production.

Amanda Spielman also commented in her speech that "there are problems both with the over-identification of some kinds of SEND in some places and under-identification in others".

✚ Read the report here: <https://bit.ly/2sTPJ0N>





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# Promoting inclusion in the earliest years

Catherine McLeod, MBE, CEO of Dingley's Promise, talks about how the organisation has developed its approach to early intervention and the promotion of inclusion.

Five years ago, Dingley's Promise was a successful charity running three specialist early years settings in the west of Berkshire. At that time, the organisation did not have a stance on inclusion and was known locally as the place to send children who would always be in special education. In reality, the children who came to the nurseries did have enormous potential to access the mainstream, but in many cases weren't

getting the chance. Over the past five years, Dingley's Promise has embraced a unique model of using specialist early intervention to build wider inclusion.

At the beginning of this five-year journey, the organisation looked at the concept of inclusion and then talked to staff and trustees about what this would mean in practical terms. A statement on inclusion, which outlined the direction the charity was moving in, was produced in 2016, said: "We provide a model for others to see successful strategies in

action, and through our specialist early intervention ensure more children have the opportunity to experience inclusion."

It outlined how the organisation would not only support children to reach their potential but would also focus on supporting mainstream settings to have the skills and knowledge to be able to support children with SEND effectively.

**The process of putting this into practice began with an increased focus on shared provision.** Shared provision enabled children to experience





“  
For the first time, children started transitioning to mainstream provision not when they reached the right age, but when it was right for them and their families.”

the mainstream in the early years, and allowed their parents to see them thrive in an inclusive setting. Partnerships with mainstream settings also provided support to them so they felt confident in working with the children, and structured transitions allowed successful settling in of the child and family with a greater chance of the child thriving in the long term.

What happened at this point though, was that there was concern from parents who had always seen Dingley's Promise as the gold standard of specialist support, and therefore the best place for their children. They were unsure about the step into mainstream and weren't comfortable with a change in what the pathway seemed to be for them.

Many had been told by other professionals that their child would never succeed in the mainstream, and therefore

they were not comfortable with the idea of leaving a purely specialist setting. While parents' views are vital and a key part of delivering the service, the practitioners were seeing the children's potential to really benefit from an inclusive, mainstream environment, and were concerned that if they stayed in a specialist setting they would not develop to the best of their capabilities.

As a result, Dingley's Promise developed an 'Entry Exit Pathway'. This pathway documents the level the child is at when they join the organisation, and what will happen as they progress in their development. It does not place limits on any child but shows parents what could be possible. The Entry Exit Pathway was

then introduced to parents during their first meeting with the organisation, to show them the many options for their child.

While mainstream was not the best option for every child, it was vital to ensure that, for those who would benefit, there was the opportunity to access it. This was transformative. Parents saw three areas: their child's development, their own views and aspirations, and the capacity and skills of mainstream settings. For each family there was a balance point between these three areas, and once the balance was right, transition to shared provision could begin.

As a result of being part of that process and understanding it from day one, the resistance that was there previously all but disappeared. For the first time, children started transitioning to mainstream provision not when they reached the right age, but when it was right for them and their families.

Alongside this key change, the third area of development was also gaining momentum. Dingley's Promise had a number of key relationships with early years' providers in the local area providing informal support and structured transition processes. While doing this work, the teams were being asked increasingly for accredited



**Last year 72 per cent of transitions of children out of the organisation were to mainstream (this is in the context of higher needs than the year before).**

As a result of Dingley's Promise, feedback from parents showed that 94 per cent felt less isolated, 97 per cent felt more confident in supporting their child and 92 per cent felt more positive about the future.

After taking training, early years practitioners felt they could support, on average, 114 per cent more children with SEND in their settings.

training that the early years' settings could do to upskill their staff to work inclusively.

The team began to search for training that would address this need, but could find nothing, and after talking to other experts in the field found that there was indeed a gap in the market. **Research with early years settings at that time showed that a huge 63 per cent felt they could not take any more children with SEND unless they had more training and support.**

Just last year Coram research showed that only 22 per cent of local authorities felt they had sufficient provision for children with SEND in the early years, so this issue continues to be critical nationally in closing the gap between children with SEND and their peers.

In light of this situation, and with the need to ensure children with SEND have the



When specialist services work in real partnership with families and mainstream settings huge changes can be achieved...

same access to their entitlements as other children, the Level 3 Certificate in Early Years Inclusive Practice was born. After development, peer review and piloting, the course was accredited by NCFE and launched in January 2018. To date, 44 practitioners working with 172 children with SEND have successfully completed the course, reporting huge increases in levels of confidence and knowledge.

One trainee commented: **"It's a brilliant course and would enhance everyone's knowledge and understanding of SEND which would in turn help all SEND children."**

The impact of the change in focus from isolated specialist intervention to one of using specialist early intervention to build wider inclusion is dramatic. The three pillars of change as outlined above are:

- the child and their experience in the early years
- the family and their knowledge of and aspirations for their child, and
- mainstream settings and their knowledge and confidence in working with children with SEND.

Last year, 72 per cent of transitions out of the organisation were to mainstream (and this is against a context of higher needs in the children worked with than the year before).

Ninety-four per cent of families reported feeling less isolated, 97 per cent felt more confident in supporting their child and 92 per cent felt more positive about the future.

Following the training, early years practitioners felt they could support, on average, 114 per cent more children with SEND in their settings.

All of this shows how using specialist early intervention to build wider inclusion provides more opportunity for children with SEND by giving them the best support at the earliest time, supporting their families to understand the processes and have high aspirations for their children, and ensuring there are spaces in mainstream nurseries through building skills and confidence in mainstream early years' settings.

When specialist services work in real partnership with families and mainstream settings huge changes can be achieved, but this must be transparent and fully focused on each individual situation and the needs of the child. In this way we can ensure the children who really need it, go to special schools, and that those who are able to thrive in a mainstream setting have the opportunity to do so.



BIO

**CATHERINE MCLEOD**

Catherine McLeod, MBE, is Chief Executive of Dingley's Promise and has worked for the last 20 years to bring about greater inclusion for people with disabilities in Asia and the UK. She has a Level 7 Diploma in Leadership and Management, is a peer mentor for ACEVO and a Trustee of Connect Reading and The Sri Lankan British Association.



**Dingley's Promise is committed to building wider inclusion and will therefore share information and advice with other services openly. Please do get in touch with CEO Catherine McLeod at [catherine.mcleod@dingley.org.uk](mailto:catherine.mcleod@dingley.org.uk) if you would like to discuss anything you have read, or to link up.**



# primary

## ONLINE DYSLEXIA SCREENING

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# Commitment to inclusion

Clare Belli explains how secondary schools across Southampton are working collaboratively to develop their provision for students with SEND.



## INTRODUCTION

The City Council commissioned Southampton Advisory Outreach Service to carry out a piece of research into secondary school provision for students with SEND across the city. As part of the city's planned drive for improvement, the purpose of this work was to identify the strengths of secondary school provision for students with SEND and to facilitate the sharing of expertise.

## THE CONTEXT FOR SOUTHAMPTON

The city of Southampton, with its diverse and ever-changing population, continues to experience high levels of deprivation. As identified by school census data, the most common primary areas of need at secondary level are moderate learning difficulties and social, emotional and mental health needs which are above the national average. It is within this context that the city provides mainstream education to students across 12 secondary schools.

The action research considered the particular barriers faced by secondary schools and examined how they were working to overcome these barriers. Findings suggested that despite the challenges of reduced funding, some schools are developing innovative ways to maximise resources and provide flexible pathways of provision for students with SEND. These include establishing a graduated approach to support with clear mechanisms for early identification of need, ongoing monitoring of progress and robust systems for self-evaluation leading to school improvement. In addition, some schools have sought to design a modified and enhanced curriculum for more vulnerable students, with flexible access to short-term interventions and alternative provision.

## STRENGTHS

Some examples of effective practice evidenced in secondary schools across the city included:

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF SEND

- A SEND working group, represented by a range of stakeholders, focusing on the development of SEND provision across the school and raising awareness of whole school accountability.
- A 'key lines of enquiry' approach to action planning, providing a clear rationale for school improvement and impacting positively on SEND provision.
- 'Test and learn' methods used to establish appropriate approaches, ensuring change is measured and collaborative.
- Engaging an external perspective to validate self-evaluation in relation to SEND and support school improvement, including quality collaboration with other services.
- Access to support for SEND from a range of leaders within school to maximise support and accountability, e.g. subject teachers, progress leads, heads of departments etc.
- Effective succession planning in schools where SENCOs are known to be retiring or moving on, ensuring provision for students with SEND is uninterrupted.
- Regular meetings between pastoral and SEND departments to ensure vulnerable

The most common primary areas of need at secondary level are moderate learning difficulties and social, emotional and mental health needs.

- students are well supported, e.g. school inclusion panel meetings.
- SEND Champions identified across all subject departments to provide advice and support for students with special educational needs.

### QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR STUDENTS WITH SEND

- A wide range of interventions and flexible pathways to support students with SEND, not limited by rigid processes and not reducing opportunities for students.
- Good practice guides for teachers identifying inclusive strategies for students with SEND across different areas of need.
- A proactive focus on teaching students new skills to bring about positive changes in behaviour.
- Lessons delivered in alternative provision within the school, delivered by subject teachers.
- Year 7 and 8 nurture groups that stay together for most lessons to provide consistent and targeted support.

### WORKING WITH STUDENTS AND PARENTS/CARERS OF STUDENTS WITH SEND

- Reasonable adjustments made for more vulnerable students clarified in school policies.
- High quality transition planning including additional visits to schools as early as Year 5.

## BIO

### CLARE BELLI

Clare Belli is a Specialist Leader in Education for SEND and is Lead for Southampton Advisory Outreach Service for SEND and Southampton Inclusion Partnership, a Teaching School specialising in developing educational provision for primary and secondary students with SEND. She has an MSc in Specific Learning Difficulties and an MA in Education for Special Educational Needs.



→ SECONDARY & POST-16

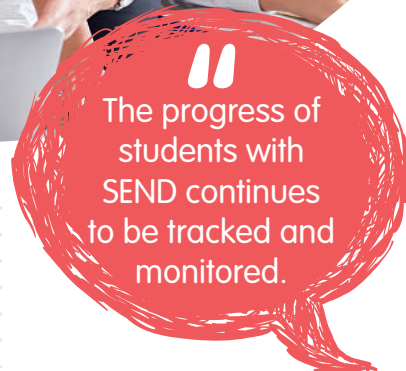
**MONITORING, TRACKING AND EVALUATION**

- Provision for SEND supported and monitored by school leaders other than the SENCO, e.g. heads of department, progress leaders, senior leadership teams.
- Lead professionals or mentors assigned to all students across the school, including those with SEND, responsible for supporting and monitoring a pupil's progress against attainment, behaviour and attendance.
- Exemplary provision mapping to ensure additional support for students is identified, monitored and analysed for impact.

**THE EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES**

- Additional interventions required by some students are organised so that they do not impact on access to mainstream lessons.

- Opportunities for SENCOs to support other schools and networks as part of their own professional development and which in turn impact positively on their own school's capacity to improve.
- Streamlined, purposeful documentation and record keeping to reduce duplication and teacher workload.



**FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

The action research highlighted the need for schools to consider how a vision for SEND needs to be driven by senior leadership teams and how the role of the SENCO can be strengthened by adopting the principles of distributed leadership to bring about collective influence. In order to develop provision and maximise positive outcomes for students with SEND, secondary schools in Southampton are working collaboratively on the aspects below:

**OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS WITH SEND**

- Capturing the small steps of progress that students with SEND make, ensuring they are clear about the specific skills they need to improve, and what success should look like. This includes the development of specific target setting for learning and/or behaviour to provide clarity for students around next steps, enable teachers to assess progress more accurately and evidence impact of intervention.
- Ensuring that students accessing alternative provision within the school receive their entitlement to a broad curriculum delivered by subject specialists. This includes having clear entry criteria and referral systems within a graduated approach to support, time limited intervention with a focus on reintegration back

to mainstream lessons, high involvement from senior leadership teams and quality first teaching from subject specialists.

**LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF SEND**

- Ensuring the vision and aims of SEND provision are clearly driven by the head teacher, in partnership with the whole senior leadership team, so that SENCOs are supported to communicate whole school responsibility for the outcomes of learners with SEND and have greater impact on improving provision at classroom level.
- Ensuring school policies inform practice and describe the reasonable adjustments that need to be made to include students with SEND.
- Developing the schools' ability to self-evaluate provision and evidence the impact of actions taken against clearly identified measures. For example, evidencing the difference a particular intervention has made to the progress of students and providing a robust rationale for allocation of these resources within the whole school budget.
- Ensuring clearly identified, streamlined and joined up systems for SEND are understood and followed at all levels, with up-to-date policies helping to ensure that during periods of change, the progress of students with SEND continues to be tracked and monitored.

**QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR STUDENTS WITH SEND**

- The development of high-quality inclusive teaching strategies to ensure that adaptive and responsive teaching is a first response to students with special educational needs and that the progress of students with SEND is everyone's responsibility.

**ASSESSMENT AND IDENTIFICATION**

- A well-defined graduated approach to support, within a cycle of assess-plan-do-review, to ensure students with SEND receive early identification and intervention.

**THE EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES**

- Joined up working and improved communication between pastoral and SEND support departments to ensure the needs of more vulnerable students are monitored.

The research has informed an exciting training programme for secondary schools, providing a collaborative opportunity for schools to work together on emerging themes. These developments are helping to secure positive outcomes for students with SEND and create long term sustainability in Southampton.





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mainstream school leaders and teachers

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# Supporting pupils with wordless books

Jo Egerton, Barry Carpenter and Sheila Hollins share the work and findings of The Open Book Project.

The crucial role that school professionals play in supporting the Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) of young people in schools is highlighted in the 2017 Government Green Paper which notes: "Appropriately trained and supported staff such as teachers, school nurses, counsellors, and teaching assistants can achieve results comparable to those achieved by trained therapists in ... addressing mild to moderate mental health." (DHSC/DfE, 2017, p. 38). With CAMHS resources stretched to breaking

point, this has never been more necessary.

Mental health is "more than the absence or management of mental health problems" (NICE, 2008). Mental health gives us the resilience to enjoy life, to survive emotional pain, to cope and to feel safe. More than half of all mental health problems emerge before the age of 14 years, so it is crucial to identify and address areas of SEMH need for children and young people, especially those with learning and communication difficulties

(DfE/DH, 2015), who are on average four times more likely to have mental health problems than their mainstream peers (Emerson and Hatton, 2007).

Teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) are uniquely placed to support children and young people's SEMH. They spend more time with them than any other professional group. Their early identification, intervention and support of pupils' SEMH difficulties can enable pupils to remain engaged in education, which

To see a summary of the green paper and to access the full document, go to <https://bit.ly/2To03Hs>



BIO



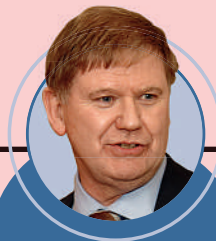
**JO EGERTON**

Jo Egerton is an independent Practitioner Research Consultant and educational writer. She is engaged by Beyond Words as a part-time Research Fellow/Project Manager on the Open Book project.



nasen connect

nc



BIO

**PROFESSOR BARRY CARPENTER**

Professor Barry Carpenter, CBE, OBE, is Director of the Open Book Project and Visiting Professor of Mental Health in Education at Oxford Brookes University. He is also Vice-Chair of Books Beyond Words.

delayed access to CAMHS might prevent. However, many school professionals are under-confident, under-trained and under-resourced in providing focused SEMH support to pupils.

Beyond Words is a charity that publishes meticulously trialled, wordless picture-stories, co-authored by topic specialists, psychiatrists, psychotherapists and people with learning and communication difficulties. The books provide structure and guidance notes for addressing specific and sometimes highly sensitive SEMH scenarios. Their pictures not only illustrate a story but, through strategic details, enable pupils to explore topics with complex emotional themes. The 'layered reading' approach lets pupils share their own stories if they want to, enabling staff to learn more about how pupils perceive their world, guide their understanding and identify where they need additional support.

**THE OPEN BOOK PROJECT**

Beyond Words has received a grant to work with 22 special schools nationally to explore how teachers and TAs can use their books to make their schools' SEMH curricula accessible for pupils who either cannot read or struggle with written words. The 'Open Book' project is divided into two phases – the first (September 2018 – August 2019) established the books as a whole-class resource for teachers, and the second (September 2019 – June 2020) supports TAs to run small group and individual SEMH interventions for pupils who need focused intervention. Phase two is in its early stages, but teachers have reported encouraging Phase one outcomes, summarised right.

Find out more about Beyond Words at <https://books.beyondwords.co.uk/>

At the beginning of Phase one, a senior leadership team member and a teacher from each school were trained in facilitating whole-class book groups. Each book group identified three 'best hoped for' learning outcomes (BHFOs) linked to the school's SEMH curriculum and individual targets. Using the Beyond Words storylines, which typically move the main character from personal difficulty through reflection to solution, teachers and TAs supported pupils to think through personal wellbeing and safety issues linked to their own experiences.

They facilitated pupils' comments, thinking and discussions around:

- ▶ The story scenario and different characters' actions, responses and feelings.
- ▶ Risks the main character took and what they might have done differently.
- ▶ How pupils could apply what they had learned in everyday life.





## → TEACHING &amp; LEARNING

As the book groups read through the books at a pace that reflected their pupils' needs and abilities, they evidenced and reported on pupil engagement and learning in three key areas relating to their BHFOs – 'knowledge', 'making decisions' and 'being empowered' to stay safe emotionally and physically.

## PROJECT OUTCOMES

Over the two terms of Phase one, many teachers were surprised by the way the Beyond Words book groups provided an entrée to young people's own experiences and behavioural risks, and helped them to listen, respond and relate better to each other. The 22 schools had identified a total of 66 BHFOs that fell within four broad areas (BHFO numbers per area in brackets): friendships, relationships and personal safety (18); identification, expression and interpretation of their own and others' emotional states (14); book group participation (12); communication, sense

of self, empowerment and autonomy (10); and whole school outcomes (2). At the end of Phase one, the project leads estimated the extent to which their class groups had attained their BHFOs using a five-item numerical Likert Scale between 4 (BHFO fully achieved) and 0 (BHFO not achieved). Teachers' ratings were as follows:

- ▶ 50 BHFOs were rated as either fully achieved (23), mostly achieved (25) or between the two (2).
- ▶ 11 were rated as partially achieved.
- ▶ Five were rated as minimally (4) or not (1) achieved.

These outcomes, along with teacher comments, suggest that using relevant Beyond Words books (alongside existing SEMH approaches) had enabled the majority of pupils to achieve BHFOs relevant to their school's SEMH curriculum and individual needs.

One project school looked at 'Making Friends' – a story of a lonely young person in search of friends. The book illustrates the young person's safe and unsafe attempts to find friends, ending

happily via a series of errors and requested support. The teacher observed that through reading the book, her group gained "a greater understanding of how to recognise how other people are feeling [and]...recognise and describe [emotion-related] body language and facial expressions". She concluded: "This has empowered them to be able to help each other more. As part of further learning in our Healthy Minds sessions, the students have participated in role play activities on what to do if they think someone is feeling sad or lonely."

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND DECLARATION OF INTEREST:

Our thanks to all 22 Open Book project schools for participating and to Barr's Court School, Hereford, for the quotations. Beyond Words has received charitable funding to convene the Open Book project and to engage a part-time independent Research Fellow/Project Manager. Beyond Words also provides schools with free copies of books used within the project.



BIO

## PROFESSOR SHEILA HOLLINS

Professor Sheila, the Baroness Hollins, is Convener of the Open Book Project. She is founder and Chair of Beyond Words, and Editor and Lead Author of the Books Beyond Words series. She is Emeritus Professor of the Psychiatry of Disability at St George's, University of London, and sits in the House of Lords as a crossbench peer.



**References** Department for Education (DfE)/Department of Health (DH) (2015) *SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 years*. London: DfE. Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)/Department for Education (DfE) (2017) *Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision* (Green Paper). London: DfE. Emerson, E. and Hatton, C. (2007) *The Mental Health of Children and Adolescents with Learning Disabilities in Britain*. London: Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities/ Lancaster University. Hollins, S., Roth, T. and Webb, B. (2015) *Making Friends (2nd edn)*. London: Books Beyond Words. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) (2008) *Promoting Children's Social and Emotional Wellbeing in Primary Education*. London: NICE.

# Considerations for teaching handwriting

Following on from her article on pencil grasp (see the November 2019 edition of *nasen Connect*) Kim Griffin, founder of Griffin OT, highlights four things to consider when teaching children handwriting.

Handwriting is a foundation skill taught in every school and it is used to demonstrate and reinforce learning on a daily basis in classrooms across the globe. The strategies and styles available to teach handwriting vary significantly. In this article, I will consider four elements that will help to develop our thinking around, and the teaching of, handwriting.

## 1 HANDWRITING IS A VERY COMPLEX ACTIVITY

Before going any further, I would like to consider the different skills a child must be proficient at to be a successful writer, as handwriting is a combination of four very different skills.

Handwriting integrates a child's motor, perceptual, visual motor and cognitive skills. The child needs to be able to:

- ▶ successfully hold on to their pencil and move it with precision,
- ▶ visually identify or read letters, and remember what they look like,
- ▶ replicate those letters using their pencil, making them the right size and placing them in the right position,

Access the NHA handwriting policy guidance at <https://bit.ly/390cles>

- ▶ demonstrate adequate interest, attention, planning and language when writing.

There are very few activities in a classroom which require such a high level of skill integration. If a child is finding handwriting a challenge, it is worth considering not only the mechanics of handwriting, but also the child's language and attention skills. When children struggle with spoken language and listening, it is highly likely they will find written language more difficult as well.

## 2 HANDWRITING NEEDS TO BE TAUGHT

Handwriting is specifically a human activity. Unlike walking, running, eating and climbing, it is not a skill we are born with; it needs to be taught. Sassoon (1995) highlighted that "unless the correct point of entry and direction of stroke for each letter is taught, understood and used from the start, it is progressively difficult to alter the wrong movement pattern that is practiced and becomes habitual".

Incorrect patterns of letter formation may result in not only illegible handwriting, but they can slow a child down as they won't automatically finish a letter



BIO

### KIM GRIFFIN

Kim is an occupational therapist with more than 15 years' experience working with children. Her current focus is on creating affordable sensory processing disorder and fine motor skills online training resources for schools, teachers and parents. She tweets as @Griffin\_OT and for more information see [www.GriffinOT.com](http://www.GriffinOT.com)



in the correct place to start the next. It also makes progressing to joined-up writing more difficult.

New policy guidance from the National Handwriting Association (NHA) recommends that “handwriting skills need to be taught both as a timetabled discrete subject and through ongoing reinforcement of skills in everyday written language activities”. They suggest that lessons should be focused, short and at regular intervals, but that this will be influenced by the age of the children and the class profile. A daily session of counterintuitive minutes is recommended for young children learning letter formation. For older children, three sessions of 15 - 20 minutes per week may work better.

### 3 READINESS FOR OBLIQUE LINES

Letters are made up of combinations of vertical, horizontal, oblique and curved shapes. Oblique lines ( $\backslash$  /) are much

harder to write than horizontal or vertical straight lines. The age at which half of children can draw an oblique line is four-and-a-half (Beery, 2010).

The age where half of children can intersect both oblique lines to form an ‘x’ is four years and 11 months. This means that several capital letters and lowercase letters, ‘k, v, w, x’, are actually outside of the expected age norms for many reception children. These norms should be considered, especially for children who have names that include letters with oblique lines.

### 4 LETTER FAMILIES VS. PHONICS

Alongside oblique lines, letters also contain directional changes. Some, like the letter ‘l,’ have none, but letters like ‘s’ and ‘z’ have three and are more difficult to learn.

In many schools, the first letter a child learns to write, aside from the letters in their name, is ‘s’. This is because many schools combine the sequence of their phonics learning (satpin) with their handwriting lessons.

Although this does make some sense (children can recognise, then practice, the same letters across both lessons), it is counterintuitive from motor learning and developmental readiness perspectives because ‘s’ is one of the hardest letters to learn. Also,

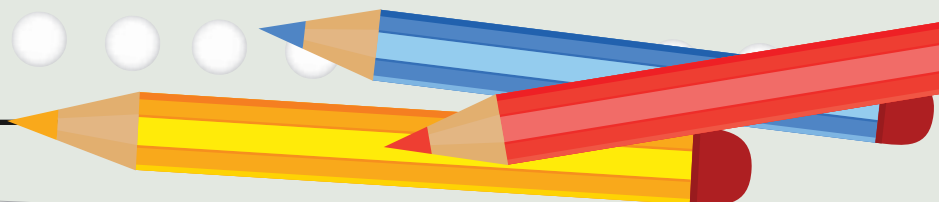
the letters in ‘satpin’ do not follow the same motor pattern. This makes them harder to learn, especially for children who have motor or perceptual skill delays.

It can be much easier to learn similar motor movements at the same time. Learning letters in letter families, e.g. tall letters, letters with descenders and so on,

Whilst handwriting requires cognitive skills, writing individual letters is primarily a motor and visual motor task.







can be easier for many children as they can practice the same motor pattern every time. For example, practicing 'c', 'o', 'a' and 'd' together reinforces the same pattern each time. However, practicing 's', 'a', 't', and 'p' does not allow for reinforcement of any pattern.

Starting with one of the hardest letters of the alphabet, 's' can also be demotivating for children who find handwriting more difficult. Whereas, starting with the letters 'l' and 't' means that most children in a reception class can experience success. This will help to build their handwriting confidence.

## 5 HANDWRITING STYLE

Finally, consideration should be given to the style of handwriting you will teach. Some schools teach individual letters first without entry/exit strokes, then, when letter formation and positioning are both

secure, joining is taught. Other schools opt for a continuous cursive style and teach individual letters with entry/exit strokes from the outset.

Entrance and exit strokes are actually variants of oblique lines, which are, as noted above, challenging for many children under four-and-a-half years of age. The NHA guidance notes that with continuous cursive style "for younger children in the year group and children with co-ordination difficulties, the additional stroke can complicate the letter shape". They also note that the overcomplicated stroke patterns can leave a number of children unable to write confidently. This

is definitely something I have seen in my clinical experience, the most heart-breaking example being a child with visual perception difficulties who couldn't actually recognise individual letters when the entrance and exit strokes were added.

It will be up to leadership teams at individual schools to determine which handwriting style and teaching techniques are the best fit for their school handwriting policy. The main advice given by the NHA is that this needs to be a whole-school decision and meet the needs of all key stages within the school. Hopefully, the four considerations in this article will be of help when making these decisions.

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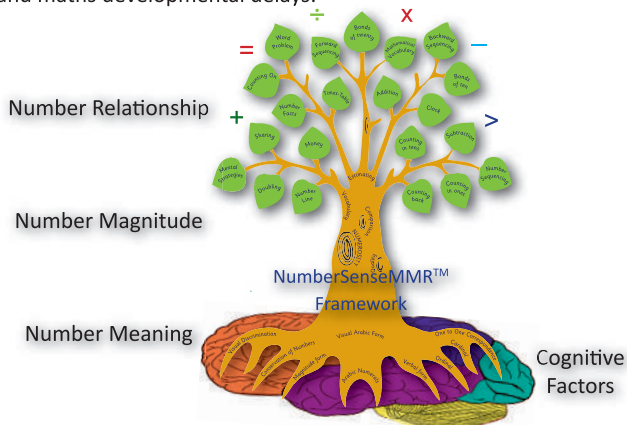
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## Dyscalculia Framework

The NumberSenseMMR™ Framework has been developed from research in neuroscience, dyscalculia, early childhood development and education.

It is validated by the University of Oxford to provide support to children at risk of dyscalculia and children performing significantly below in maths.

The NumberSenseMMR™ Framework consists of three developmental stages that help to identify dyscalculia symptoms and maths developmental delays:

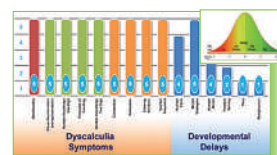


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BIO **KAMAL BODHANKER**

Kamal is part of the education team at nasen providing support and advice on nasen resources and training opportunities. Kamal is also the nasen lead on a current Department for Education (DfE) funded project.

# Promoting high aspirations for all

Kamal Bodhanker, Education Development Officer at nasen, explains what Dual and Multiple Exceptionality (DME) is and why it is important to reiterate that SEND and high learning potential can coexist.





### WHAT IS DME?

The recognition of neurodiversity in society has raised the profile of co-morbidity or co-occurring needs and its lesser known counterpart, Dual and Multiple Exceptionality (DME).

DME is a term used to describe individuals with one or more special educational need or disability (SEND) who also have high learning potential (HLP); the most common definition of children with HLP is those with exceptional abilities (approximately 0.01 per cent of learners).

In some cases, where the area of need and area of knowledge is visible, the consistency of SEND and HLP is immediately obvious. nasen's late patron Professor Stephen Hawking is the example that best illustrates this type of individual. However, most often the SEND or the HLP masks one or the other, leading to wasted potential and frustration.

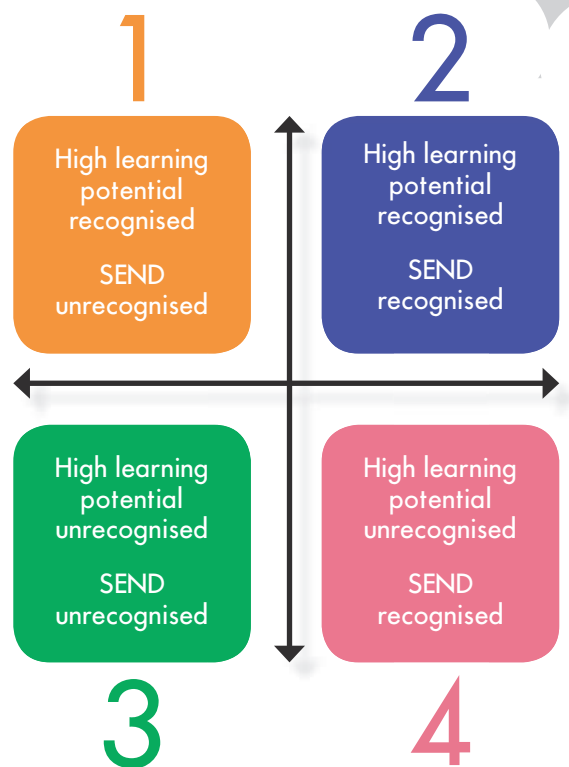
nasen and Potential Plus UK's identification of four DME pupil profiles (2018) provides a useful outline to support understanding of the four basic types of DME (right):

**Type 1 – HLP recognised, SEND unrecognised:** their ability enables them to 'get by', compensating for their special needs through use of their advanced abilities.

**Type 2 – HLP unrecognised, SEND recognised:** often labelled for what they cannot do, rather than what they can, often failing to achieve in school and can display negative or disruptive behaviours.

**Type 3 – HLP unrecognised, SEND unrecognised:** each aspect masks the other; this is the group most at risk of under-achievement.

**Type 4 – HLP recognised, SEND recognised;** these children and young people receive the support and challenge they need.



Co-production with parents, children and young people themselves, will prove more successful.

### WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH DME?

By Teachers	By Leaders
Formally identify the SEND and formally identify the areas of HLP.	Commit, at senior leadership level, to identify and support all pupils with DME.
Know how the SEND and HLP interact with each other.	Raise the profile of DME, lead interventions and run CPD on DME.
Appreciate the cognitive demand used in functioning well and recognise the effect this may have on emotional regulation and behaviour.	Appoint a lead teacher who will keep up-to-date with research, policy and practice.
Ensure that pupils' HLP is challenged through carefully designed classwork that suits their SEND and HLP.	Provide staff with access to DME resources and publications.
Closely monitor the progress of pupils with DME.	Offer opportunity for pupils with DME (and their families) to interact with each other, if so desired.
Set targets in recognition of the pupil's DME.	Regularly review the academic progress and wider development of pupils with DME.
Keep parents/carers involved and informed.	Remain alert to the social, emotional and mental wellbeing of children with DME in light of the potential additional sensitivities.
	Systematically review the provision for those with DME.

### WHAT ARE THE SIGNIFIERS OF POSSIBLE DME?

Given the range of potential combinations of areas of additional need and high potential, the identification of DME can be complex. To provide an initial indication, Potential Plus UK has identified the following signifiers of possible DME:

- written work and verbal work are asynchronous
- test results are at odds with subject knowledge
- vast knowledge about a subject or an area of interest outside school
- demonstrates engagement with complex concepts
- good problem-solver
- thinks conceptually

For those with DME, the challenges of the co-existence of their particular needs can lead to chronic underachievement and low self-esteem. In turn, this can lead to a

variety of serious consequences ranging from exclusion, self-exclusion, offending behaviour and poor mental health.

### WHAT WIDER CONSEQUENCES MAY OCCUR?

- 1 Needs or abilities can be misdiagnosed or misinterpreted leading to confusing support and provision.
- 2 Provision for the SEND takes priority over challenge to meet full potential.
- 3 Atypical intervention strategies may be required to meet the need(s) or HLP.
- 4 Lack of sufficient support for additional needs within HLP programmes and provision.
- 5 The gap between teacher expectations and pupil expectations may impact on self-confidence and emotional health.
- 6 Poor self-esteem or lack of confidence as a consequence of asynchronous development.

### HOW CAN TEACHERS IDENTIFY DME?

When assessing a child internally, a school should review a range of evidence including schoolwork, work done at home, classroom observations, formal reports and reports from the teacher and other professionals. As with all effective SEND practice, co-production with parents, children and young people themselves, will prove more successful.

nasen estimates that between 2-5 per cent of pupils with SEND have HLP, indicating that there are approximately 60,000 pupils whose SEND may mask their abilities or whose abilities may reduce the urgency to meet their SEND (Ryan & Waterman, 2018). These statistics indicate that there are children at increased risk of underachievement, demonstrating poor behaviour and mental health issues in every school in the country who need access to personalised, challenging and supported provision.



BIO **ADRIENNE KATZ**

Adrienne Katz is Director of Youthworks, an author and a CPD-accredited trainer. Adrienne runs the annual Cybersurvey and research programme on young people's online lives with Dr A. El Asam of Kingston University. Adrienne is a member of the Association of Adult & Child Online Safety Specialists (AACOSS). *Vulnerable Children in a Digital World* is published in partnership with Internet Matters and can be found at:

<https://bit.ly/2QPu0jW>



# Cyber safety

Adrienne Katz shares findings from the latest Cybersurvey report conducted by Youthworks in collaboration with Internet Matters.





see content urging them to be too thin, to self-harm or consider suicide (among risks that include racist content, bullying, threats and scams). They're online for longer too. Research with almost 3,000 children and young people aged 10-16 in mainstream schools found that five vulnerable groups were at greater risk than their peers online:

1. Family vulnerability (experience of being in care and young carers)
2. Communication difficulties (speech and language or hearing difficulties and needing help with English)
3. Physical disability, vision impairment and long-standing illness
4. Special educational needs
5. Emotional and mental health difficulties

Though there are specific risks, these offline vulnerabilities often co-occur. Schools, parents or carers could help children with tailored, online safety education. If a child encounters a problem, it's an opportunity to support and check for other risks because risk types are related – if one is present, others are likely. Findings concluded that:

- ▶ Those with SEN were especially susceptible to contact risks – being pressured or tricked into 'sexting', coercion, threats and manipulation.



**'My phone is a better version of me.'**

**'I don't have to have eye contact so I can talk to people.'**

**'My phone makes me feel safe.'**

**'I'm online 9 hours a day in the holidays.'**

**'My phone makes me feel like I have a place with other people and that I don't feel different or segregated from others.'**

- ▶ Those with communication difficulties and family or social vulnerability were more at risk of cyber scams (in-app payments, card fraud, fake goods), conduct risks and cyber-aggression.
- ▶ Those with a physical disability or communication difficulty were more at risk of a conduct risk, high networking/photo sharing levels and being a victim of cyber-aggression.

Children who are vulnerable offline are at greater risk online than their peers. Yet for many of them, the internet is a vital 'window on the world', a 'mood manager', a way to blank out sensory irritants and a place where consistent emoticons are easier to read than people's facial expressions. It's also a crucial learning tool, endlessly entertaining and connecting them to others.

In a sample of children and young people aged 10-16, 87 per cent of 420 youngsters with special needs own a smartphone and 69 per cent have a social media profile. Yet vulnerable children are more likely than their peers to



Those with learning difficulties are a third more likely to spend 5+ hours a day online, 27 per cent view sites promoting self-harm, 25 per cent view pro-anorexia sites and 24 per cent view self-harm or suicide content. Too often, technology can be a substitute for carer interaction and be seen as a babysitter, with the child developing a narrow repertoire of online activity they endlessly repeat.

Young people can fall victim online to someone who knows them offline and is aware of their vulnerability, using knowledge to manipulate their target. They may be persuaded to send explicit photos by being tricked into believing it is a love relationship. Those with special educational needs are at greater risk of abuse.

Risk-taking is to be expected in the teen years but enjoyment of adventure, challenge and risk may be heightened in some people; young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties tend to take risks online as well as offline.

To help, needs and motivation should be understood. Going online can provide a space to escape from or compensate for offline reality or to find sensation and fun but they may lack social skills and be less lively online in the way that they interact. They tend to disclose and share less in contrast to their more

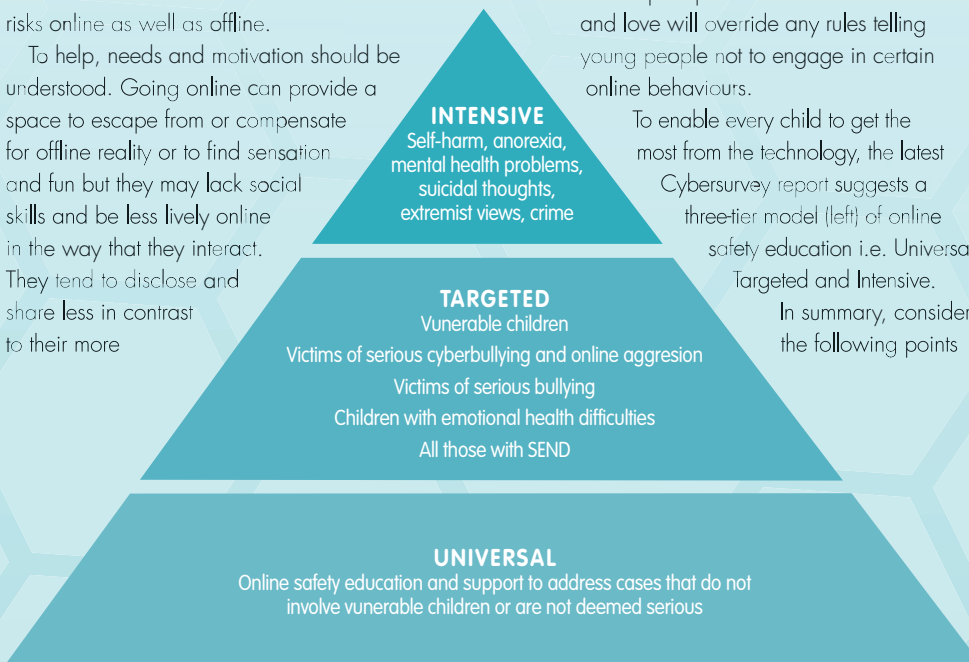
For direct access to the 'Vulnerable Children in a Digital World' report, published in partnership with Internet Matters, go to <https://bit.ly/2QPu0jW>

extrovert peers or alternatively share too much. Others can spot this and exploit it. Recognising their motivation and exploring safe ways for them to get their needs met can help. A powerful need for validation and love will override any rules telling young people not to engage in certain online behaviours.

To enable every child to get the most from the technology, the latest Cybersurvey report suggests a three-tier model (left) of online safety education i.e. Universal, Targeted and Intensive. In summary, consider the following points

when planning intervention for online safety for vulnerable children and young people:

- ▶ There is no 'one size fits all' online safety policy, but rather a three-tier model should be delivered continually.
- ▶ Proactive risk assessment, staff training, and practice are essential.
- ▶ Look beyond the presenting issue to consider 'related risks'.
- ▶ Emotions can override rules – interventions should consider how the conduct makes the child feel and if this need can be fulfilled more safely.



A three-tier model of delivery of Online Safety Education and Support for Children and Young People



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BIO 

**MARIJKE MILES**

Marijke Miles is a member of the NAHT's National Executive and Chair of the NAHT's SEND Council. She was Headteacher of an SEMH school for 10 years and has been Headteacher of Baycroft, a school for secondary students with moderate learning difficulties, since 2017.





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# MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

Marijke Miles talks about the importance of language when thinking and talking about behaviour.

**A**s a straight-talking pragmatist, I eschew 'newspeak' (think George Orwell's 1984) and pretentious language. We need to communicate as much as we can

and as easily as we can in the interests of children. However, I am also a lifelong advocate for students whose behaviour can be challenging both for themselves and for others around them. Therefore, I find myself needing to insist on a lexicon which promotes their dignity, and in doing so, nurtures an internal narrative reinforcing the values and understanding we have developed as a profession around emotional and behavioural needs. This means finding the sweet spot between tact and tenacity in pursuing this with other adults in order to avoid validating what we tolerate.

It's a real disappointment that SEMH seems to lag behind Learning Difficulties in terms of the sensitivity to unfortunate and unhelpful language. We can all call to mind terms such as 'remedial', 'simple' and

far worse, terms which quite rightly cause sharp intakes of breath in any polite circle. And yet, in relation to behaviour, I still regularly hear terminology from colleagues and partner professionals that makes me feel uncomfortable, even those I consider both well-intentioned and well informed.

## HOW CAN WE ENCOURAGE COLLEAGUES TO REFLECT ON THEIR LEXICON WITHOUT CREATING BARRIERS TO COLLABORATIVE WORKING?

In considering this question, I am reminded of the Choristers' Prayer: "Grant that what we sing with our lips we may believe in our hearts, and what we believe in our hearts we may show forth in our lives." In other words, carefully considered language bears out what we think and feel. But equally it in turn provides the frame of reference for our responses and attitudes and therefore influences our behaviour.

The power of language for good or ill is abundantly acknowledged and understood in this day and age. Both printed material





and the internet are awash with material elucidating the importance of self-talk, neuro-linguistic programming, a shared lexicon and suchlike.

Why then, is it still acceptable to describe a distressed child as “kicking-off”? On behalf of my students and their families I find this term deeply offensive. Outlawing it was a first and powerful step in embracing the communicable intent in the behaviours of students at my school, refocusing on what lies beneath rather than the tip of the iceberg. I’ll leave you to decide what sort of people do “kick off”; certainly not traumatised, frustrated, anxious children crying out to us about their unmet needs. As far as I am concerned, using a term like this is carelessly pejorative and dismissive and lays the blame squarely at the feet of the young person, leaving the adult as a judging observer rather than an empathetic companion.

### HOW CAN WE USE LANGUAGE TO SHOW OUR STUDENTS THAT WE ARE WITH THEM AND SHARE THE TASK OF RECOVERING THEIR EQUILIBRIUM?

I am certain that most professionals we encounter will these days have evolved from using attention seeking (again, implied criticism, as if this is something the child shouldn’t be receiving) to attention needing (legitimising the child’s request to adults to provide that which they feel the lack of). But what about the frequently seen ‘planned ignoring’? Is it ever acceptable to ignore

a child trying to get a need met through their behaviour? Using the dictionary definition of ignore (i.e. refuse to take notice of or acknowledge; disregard intentionally), what does this say about how important their distress, or anxiety or fear is to you? This is not to say that deciding not to respond to certain behaviours can never be the right thing to do. It’s an important strategy in our repertoire but the significance of exactly how we describe using it is self-evident.

### HOW CAN WE USE LANGUAGE TO PROMOTE THE VALUES AND CULTURE OF A COMMUNITY?

Really thinking about language and lexicon as a community takes time and trust. It’s a shared vulnerability to admit, “we’ve been using that phrase but now we think about it, it’s not really OK and we’re not going to do it anymore”. And holding each other to that commitment. At my school, we tend to think even more forensically as a team about the things we say and what we mean when new colleagues join us. It is so easy to know what you think and feel in your head but to belie this with a careless or colloquial lexicon. It is so important in inducting people quickly to the values and culture around behaviour to be consistent and precise in the way we talk about students and therefore how we all come to see them and experience them.

At my school recently, we reconsidered the term ‘honeymoon period’. We challenged ourselves and realised that there can be a startlingly negative connotation to this phraseology; does it imply that children are somehow choosing to be good until the novelty wears off? Until you see their ‘true colours’? In order to mislead adults? We’ve worked hard on reframing for ourselves the behaviours that we sometimes see when children start to trust us and start to feel safe with us. So, instead of that sense of somehow finally seeing how difficult they can be, we’ve learned to acknowledge as an important and powerful moment, and something of a compliment to us, when a child finally feels able to take the risk of us seeing them not being the best version of themselves. We embrace this as evidence that, inherently, they want us to know them and to be alongside them in their distress instead of being alone inside themselves with their most painful thoughts and feelings.

Adult anxiety is an understandable reaction to dysregulated behaviour in students. Language has a powerful role in ameliorating this and enabling them to stay the course with students emotionally at their lowest times. A colleague from another school recently shared an expression they use to describe that small group of students in every school who together take up the greatest amount of time and energy; it is, ‘the celebrities’. I shared this with my team and they adopted it with enthusiasm, appreciating the warmth and humour it lent to reframing our more demanding characters and their impact on the community.

It has already paid dividends, not merely in the wider sense of acceptance that every community will have their ‘celebrities’ with the particular conditions which need to be met in order for them to thrive. It has also provided a host of opportunities for gentle humour and diffusion, much of which centres around the absolute privilege of working with our most ‘colourful’ characters. Thankfully, none of the key workers to date has asked me to “get me out of here”, with or without their celebrity. And if that’s not the power of positive language, I don’t know what is!

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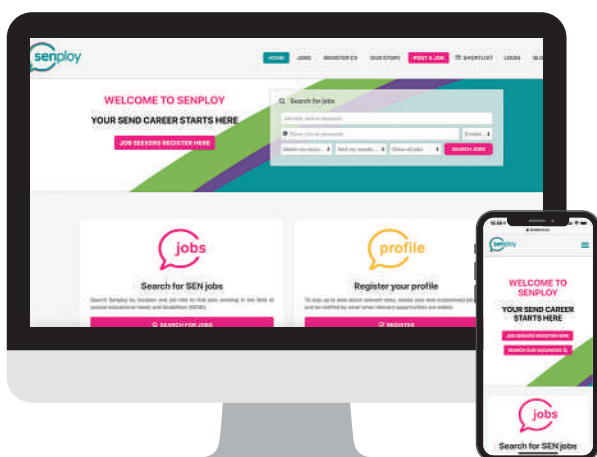
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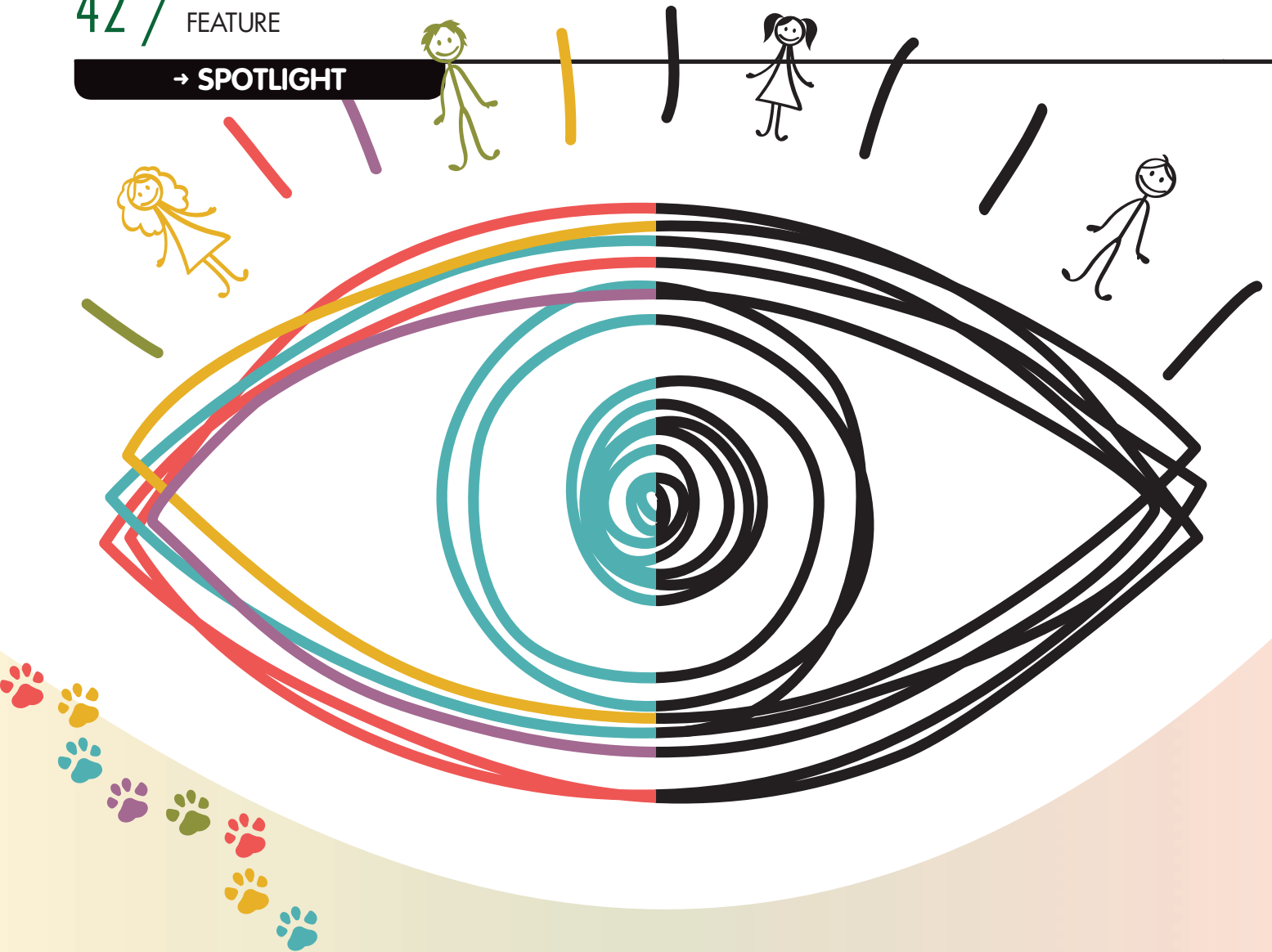
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# Visual Impairment – supporting families

Josie Lawson shares information about the work of Guide Dogs and the support they can offer to children and young people with a visual impairment, and their families.

In the UK alone, two in every 1,000 children and young people under 25 live with vision impairment (VI).

Finding the best specialist support that meets a child's needs can feel a complex and daunting task for some parents, and due to the current challenges

in funding, education professionals too may need support to meet the needs of the families they work with.

That's why Guide Dogs has recently released a set of free downloadable guides to support children and young people with VI in education, from nursery to university level. Available for free, professionals find them an invaluable resource to pass on to

parents already on their journey, or to those who don't know where to begin.

## WHY GUIDE DOGS?

Following the merger with Blind Children UK (BCUK) in 2016, Guide Dogs has extended its services to provide support to children and young people with a VI, from ages 0 – 25.

As part of this support, its specialist Education Team is on-hand to support parents and professionals alike to ensure children with a VI get the best from their education. They can offer help with:

- providing tools to prepare for education meetings
- information around statutory rights and funding
- explaining complex terms and jargon
- working through processes and forms.

The team recently released a set of education self-help guides, available to download for free online, to support young people and the professionals working in the sector, helping them to help the families they work with.

## NAVIGATING THE EHCP PROCESS

When it comes to reviewing or applying for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) for their child, parents can feel overwhelmed by the specialist terminology and the many abbreviations used.

As education professionals work with increasingly large caseloads, they can often struggle to find the time and resources to explain the processes involved, and the statutory deadlines that LAs must adhere to.

Guide Dogs' guides on EHCPs and the graduated approach give an overview of the entire process, listing the statutory deadlines and explaining the jargon used in simple terms. They can also be used as a reference, so a family can see where they are in the process, and what their next steps might be.

The guides also include a template letter which parents can use as a framework to submit their child's application. This is

especially helpful for those who don't know where to start.

The Education Team can also offer tailored advice over the phone to parents on how to structure their letters.

## STARTING, OR MOVING TO, A NEW SCHOOL

Searching for a new school can be a time-consuming task for parents of a child with a VI (especially if they're unsure of what to be on the lookout for).

Guide Dogs has created a best-practice guide that outlines the type of questions that may be helpful for parents to consider when moving to a new educational setting. Education professionals may find it useful to pass this on to families who will be relocating to a new educational environment in the near future.

The guide includes detailed questions to ask about the physical environment of the new setting, which type of support will be available, and how support will be accessed.

## HIGHER EDUCATION AND DISABLED STUDENTS ALLOWANCE

Some older students who wish to progress to Higher Education (HE) may be unaware that they are eligible for a Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and other support whilst at university. Even if a

student is aware, they may feel uncertain of where to start, or what the process might be for accessing these.

Guide Dogs has created a guide for young people transitioning to HE.

The document gives details on how to apply for DSA, the steps involved, and who they can turn to for support whilst at university or college.

As with all the self-help guides mentioned, the specialist Education Team at Guide Dogs can offer tailored advice based on individual circumstances.

## FURTHER SUPPORT FOR PROFESSIONALS

As well as education guides, Guide Dogs can offer professionals support through its advice line, signposting to other specialist national organisations that they may have previously been unaware of.

Guide Dogs also provides independent, expert advice and support on all accessible and standard technology and software, with a grants scheme that can provide 90 per cent toward the total cost of funding for equipment and software, where no statutory funding is available.

- For details of further resources and information for professionals, please contact the CYP Advice Line on 0800 781 1444 or email the Education Team at [cyps@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:cyps@guidedogs.org.uk)

To download free education self-help guides, go to <https://bit.ly/3aeCDw3>



BIO

### JOSIE LAWSON

Josie Lawson is a Service Marketing Officer at Guide Dogs. She works closely with Guide Dogs' CYP Education Support team, which provides advice and support on getting the best education for children with vision impairment. Josie also works closely with Guide Dogs' whole range of children and young people's services, supporting children with a VI from birth to adulthood.



# Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) – supporting research opportunities

Katie Chadd and Caroline Wright outline how the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists is working to raise awareness of the need for more understanding and research into Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) – “the most common childhood condition you’ve never heard of” (Norbury, 2018).

Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) are now the most common primary type of special educational need in England. On average, two children in every class of 30 (7.6 per cent) start school with DLD (Norbury et al. 2016), making it the most prevalent SLCN condition, though one that few people outside the speech and language therapy profession have heard of.

Most children with SLCN will not meet the threshold for obtaining an Education Health and Care Plan (Department for Education, 2019), though many require support from a speech and language



therapist, access to which is variable across the country. Speech and language therapy intervention can make a difference to children with DLD but there is a need for the profession to better understand exactly ‘what’ works best (Ebbels et al., 2018).

Evidence-based practice (EBP) triangulates scientific research findings with clinical expertise and considers the preferences of the individual receiving support. Speech and language therapists must use EBP but need scientific research in order to do so.

The RCSLT sets out to identify the most important areas for research efforts to focus on, in order to shed light on some of the key ‘unknowns’. We involved children with DLD and their parents, as well as SENCOs, classroom teachers, and other health and education professionals. Participants in small workshops were presented with theme-grouped ‘unknowns’ and ideas gathered from speech and language therapists; for the accessibility theme, titles were simplified, e.g. ‘intervention’ became ‘things that help you’.

## BIO KATIE CHADD

Katie Chadd is a Speech and Language Therapist and Research Officer at the RCSLT. Katie has worked on the RCSLT’s research priorities projects, which aim to identify and publish the ‘top ten’ research topics needed to address the evidence-to-practice gap in speech and language therapy.





## TOP 10 RESEARCH PRIORITIES

**1** Outcomes for individuals with DLD across settings (e.g. language provision, mainstream school), in relation to curriculum access, language development and social skills.

**2** Specific characteristics of evidence-based DLD interventions which facilitate progress towards the goals of an individual with DLD.

**3** Effectiveness of a face-to-face versus indirect approach to intervention for individuals with DLD towards the goals of an individual with DLD.

**4** Effective interventions targeting receptive language for individuals with DLD.

**5** Impact of including speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)/developmental language disorder (DLD) in teacher training course curricula on referral rates and level of support for children with DLD.

**6** Impact of SLT interventions for adolescents and adults with DLD, on wider functional outcomes (e.g. quality of life, access to the curriculum, social inclusion and mental health).

**7** Implementation of SLT recommendations in the classroom by teaching staff: confidence levels, capacity, capability and levels of success.

**8** Effective ways of teaching self-help strategies to children and young people with DLD.

**8** Impact of targeted vocabulary interventions on curriculum access for individuals with DLD.

**10** Impact of teacher training (on specific strategies/ language support) on academic attainment in adolescents with DLD in secondary schools.



BIO



CAROLINE WRIGHT

Caroline Wright is a policy adviser at the RCSLT, where she leads on children and young people's policy in England. As part of this role, Caroline worked on *Bercow: Ten Years On*, a review of provision for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs in England, published in March 2018.

Concepts of speech and language therapy, DLD, research and 'setting priorities' were introduced, and the children and parents then ranked the themes to demonstrate which topics they considered priorities. The outcomes from this work guided discussions at large multi-stakeholder workshops, which brought together myriad professionals and those with lived experience of DLD. The result was 60 refined research areas for DLD. A combination of results from a survey and information collected from children and parents, helped to identify the top 10 out of the 60.

The top 10 is a call to action, so the work doesn't end here. The RCSLT is undertaking further work to influence research funding bodies to allocate money to studies addressing the DLD priorities, to encourage researchers to consider them when planning projects, and to facilitate speech and language therapists and other professionals to carry out local work which will help address them.

To ensure learners with DLD receive the best quality care possible, we need the research, health and education sectors to work together and raise awareness of DLD, the need for support for individuals with DLD, and the requisite funding for more research into how we can do this best. Education professionals are well

placed to support the DLD research priorities in a number of ways, including:

- disseminating the information across your school teams and through extended networks
- sharing the top ten widely, and particularly with colleagues in SEND research
- speaking with speech and language therapists you work with about DLD and any current research they are using.
- undertaking a small data collection or a case study exercise which reflects a priority area
- discussing them with your learners, and their families/carers and obtaining their views
- joining in the conversation online using #DLDResearchPriorities.

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

The RCSLT has produced a series of resources to support with raising awareness of DLD, and the research priorities. To get involved or share your feedback, please email [info@rcslt.org](mailto:info@rcslt.org)

Factsheet: <https://bit.ly/2RjwSo5>

Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekE1cpZQgQo&t=2s>

Clinical information:

<https://bit.ly/2Tt8IKu>

Research Priorities (info, posters and infographics):

<https://bit.ly/2NtCN9c>



# tes

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24-25 April 2020

Manchester Central

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Meet a wide range of suppliers, charities and associations with discounts just for visitors.

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**3. Attend free Special Features**

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[tessenshow.co.uk/manchester](https://tessenshow.co.uk/manchester)

Join the conversation

🐦 @SENshowUK #TesSENNorth

Event partners:





# Ask the team

There is always a steady stream of questions arriving at nasen House and, of course, the Education Team answers them as soon as possible. But, while many of them are specific to a particular context, the answers to a number of them could be helpful to the wider nasen membership. 'Ask the team', formerly 'Connect with Us', provides the space to share these questions and answers.

✉ [nasenconnect@nasen.org.uk](mailto:nasenconnect@nasen.org.uk) ☎ 01827 311500 🐦 @nasen\_org 📘 search: @nasen.org

If you have a question, the answer to which you think would be useful for everyone, please submit it to [nasenconnect@nasen.org.uk](mailto:nasenconnect@nasen.org.uk). Of course, you can always give nasen House a call too.

## HOW TO BECOME A SENCO

I am passionate about SEND and would like to know how to train to be a SENCO. I have been teaching for three years in a secondary school. What are my best options please?

**Teacher, Sheffield**

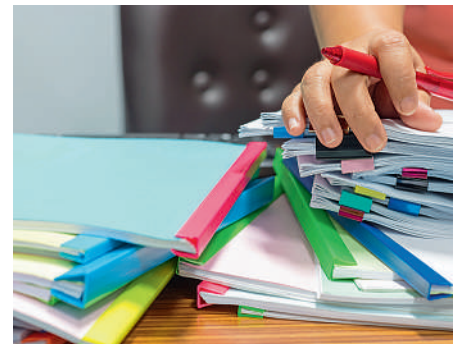
**Editor:** I am pleased to hear that you are so interested in SEND. It can be a challenging but also very rewarding area of education. There are several courses of action you can take: talk to your SENCO, line manager and head of department about your interest to see if there is anything that your school can do to help to give you more experience in this area, both internally (e.g. helping to run a homework club for pupils who need extra support); or externally, by allowing you to attend courses in your area on specific areas of SEND. Register as a Bronze member with nasen (if you haven't already) and have a look at the Focus On training which is up to nine hours of free online training covering six modules (<https://bit.ly/393TnVn>). You are able to select the training most appropriate to the age of pupils that you teach. Read around the subject and familiarise yourself with key documentation such as the 2015 SEND Code of Practice and the SEND sections of Ofsted's 2019 Education Inspection Framework. These are good places to start on your journey. Good luck!

## GETTING THE BALANCE RIGHT

I am a SENCO in a primary school and obviously I am responsible for children with SEND across the school. However, I'm not sure how much I'm supposed to be doing and how much class teachers are responsible for. I am attending all review meetings with parents and writing all support plans for children receiving SEN support (with input from staff). We are only a one form entry school but I'm finding my workload increasingly unmanageable as I have a class of my own and am released half a day a week for SENCO work. Can you advise please?

**Primary SENCO, North Yorks**

**Editor:** I'm sorry that you are feeling overwhelmed by your workload. Every teacher



is a teacher of SEND so all class teachers should be taking responsibility for the learning of all the pupils in their class. It may be useful to speak to the headteacher or line manager to discuss your role. In addition, CPD would help to upskill your staff and give them confidence to carry out planning and to meet parents more independently. You may like to see the latest report from the National SENCO Workload Survey carried out by Bath Spa University at <https://bit.ly/3a9CsC4>. You could also share it with the headteacher.

## EARLY YEARS L3 SENCO COURSE

As an Early Years SENCO in Wolverhampton, I would be very interested in attending nasen's Early Years Level 3 SENCO training. I have registered my interest on your website but haven't heard anything. Can you let me know when and where the next training will be taking place near me?

**Early Years SENCO, Wolverhampton**

**Editor:** Thanks for your enquiry. The course is only available in Local Authorities (LAs) that were part of the Early Years SENCO Project and have trainers in their LAs who have been trained to deliver the course. I'm afraid Wolverhampton wasn't one of these LAs. We will keep your details and if Wolverhampton or any of the neighbouring Local Authorities become part of the project, we will pass them on to the relevant trainers. Our aim is to have an Early Years L3 accredited SENCO in every PVI setting in the country!

# Reviews

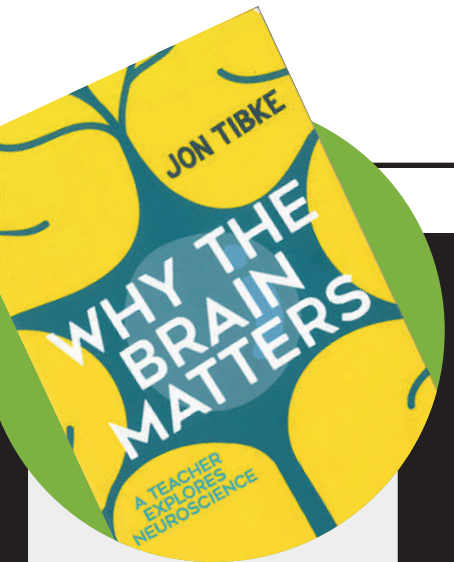
## WHY THE BRAIN MATTERS

'Why the brain matters' has a clear mission to enable teachers to better understand the neuroscience of the brain for the benefit of their pupils.

The author tells us why we need to know about the brain's structure and functions, what we and our pupils should know, and what we should dismiss as neuromyths. He gives guidance into the research available and how to keep up with reliable and accurate information,

and how schools can play a part in influencing future research.

The text is well laid out with bold subheadings that make it easy to dip in and out according to the reader's specific areas of interest. I found this a good way to familiarise myself with the content before reading in depth. It is well referenced and I particularly liked the way the author demonstrated his understanding of the brain's development with reference to the educational stages,



**Publisher:** Corwin  
**Author:** John Tibke  
**ISBN:** 078-1-473-99291-7  
**Reviewed by:** Julia Rowlandson, SpLD consultant (www.us-l.co.uk)

and also his awareness of neurodiversity. Each chapter ends with a summary activity which encourages the reader to think about their own setting and further explore issues raised.

## UNDERSTANDING THE VOICES AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF AUTISTIC YOUNG PEOPLE – FROM RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

The first five chapters, which would be particularly helpful to those undertaking postgraduate study, cover in detail autism and SEN teaching in Northern Ireland, while cross-relating to wider UK legislation.

Topics include definitions of the Autistic Spectrum, inclusion or integration, labelling, the rights of those with neurodiversity, advocacy, and the efficacy of mainstream teaching. Goodall discusses methodology, ethical considerations and models of participation when working with young learners particularly to gain an authentic 'student voice'.

The final five chapters use students' own words, feelings and drawings about their educational experience, with chapters seven and eight giving insight into the school layout, sensory issues, teachers, 'personal inclusion' rather than universal inclusion, how the students perceive their

autism diagnoses, and how they are treated by other pupils. The students highlight both positive and negative experiences and suggest strategies for addressing the latter. A good choice for researching 'pupil voice'.



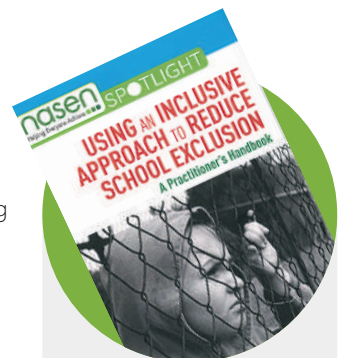
**Publisher:** Routledge  
**Author:** Craig Goodall (Dr)  
**ISBN:** 978-0-367-25325-7  
**Reviewed by:** Janet Oostendorp, SEN teacher and researcher, nasen Specialist Provision Advisory Group member

## USING AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO REDUCE SCHOOL EXCLUSION: A PRACTITIONER'S HANDBOOK

This book encourages a proactive approach to reducing exclusion through relatable scenarios and case studies. Written by two knowledgeable practitioners with a breadth of experience both in schools and the wider SEND sector, the book captures vignettes from young people, SENCOs, experts and the authors themselves.

The comprehensive summary of the context of DfE and school policy in England, provides practitioners with a clear review of how policies can direct varying practice. An extremely useful part of the book is the narrative on how to navigate the challenges to inclusion. This significantly informs a useful toolkit to support inclusion and proactively reduce exclusion. The Framework for Reflection included in part four of the handbook, appears to be an excellent tool for whole-school and MAT reviews of approaches to inclusion.

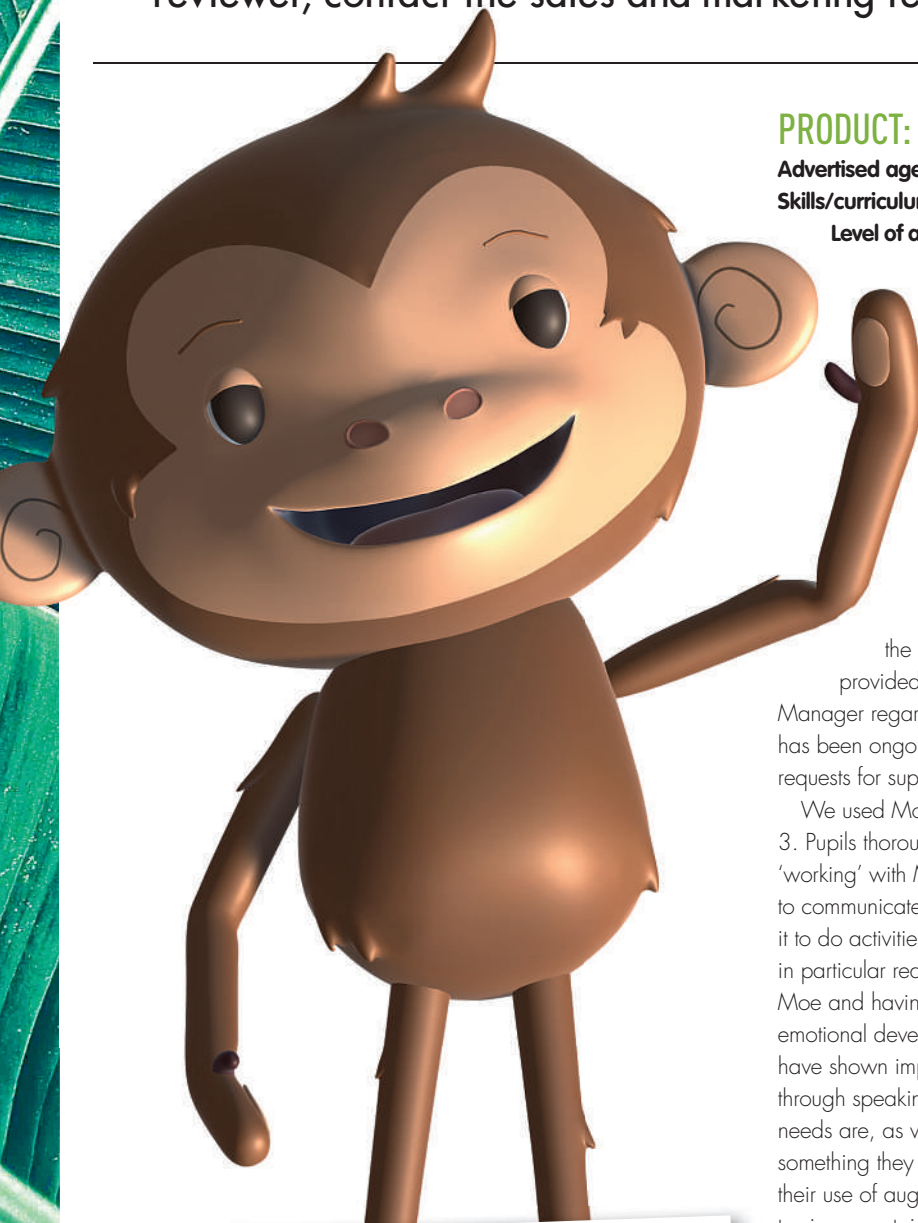
This Practitioner's Handbook is highly accessible and easy to navigate. It would be a valuable asset to all settings and a useful tool to inform leadership discussions to build an inclusive approach that considers multiple perspectives.



**Publisher:** Routledge  
**Authors:** Tristan Middleton, Lynda Kay  
**ISBN:** 978-0-429-45540-7  
**Reviewed by:** Kamal Bodhanker, Education Development Officer, nasen



In the product review feature, you can read about how products have been received and used in real settings. If you are interested in becoming a reviewer, contact the sales and marketing team at [sales@nasen.org.uk](mailto:sales@nasen.org.uk)



## PRODUCT: MOE THE MONKEY

**Advertised age range:** 5-19 years

**Skills/curriculum areas:** Literacy, PSHE, IT, Citizenship

**Level of adult involvement needed:** Two adults per group of 1-10 pupils

**Trialed by:** Rachel Stoke, Pastoral Manager

**Setting:** Woodlands School (special), Coleshill

### OVERVIEW:

Moe the Monkey is an interactive avatar system that is able to see and hear children as well as speak to them. Moe is 'controlled' by an adult in a different room to the child or children and uses technology to speak using the adults voice (disguised) as well as copying their gestures and facial expressions. This facilitates interaction between Moe and the children.

The set-up in school was completed by Evoke Education, the company that developed Moe the Monkey. They provided comprehensive training for our Pastoral Team and IT Manager regarding how Moe works and how to use it. Input from Evoke has been ongoing and they are always quick to respond to requests for support.

We used Moe with pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the experience of 'working' with Moe, including having the ability to communicate with the monkey and request it to do activities alongside them. Two pupils in particular really enjoyed the experience with Moe and having their communication, social and emotional development needs met. The children have shown improvement in communication skills through speaking about themselves and what their needs are, as well as explaining how they feel; this is something they wouldn't do with a real person. Another child expanded on their use of augmentative or alternative communication by requesting Moe to sing a certain song, using a full sentence.

In the short term, Moe provides a fun and exciting way for pupils to expand on their skills. In the long term, it can be adapted to be used with safeguarding procedures or expanded into the curriculum via communication, ICT or literacy.

“  
Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the experience of 'working' with Moe.”

### WHAT THE SCHOOL PARTICULARLY LIKED:

- The fact that Moe is animated and is able to move.
- It can act as a 'barrier' for developing communication which expands on barrier techniques used by the Speech and Language Department.

Moe the monkey has been a great piece of equipment to support our pupils to expand and use different people to communicate needs and their own thoughts. We believe Moe has been a great resource for the money spent.

+ <https://bit.ly/2UycZwC>





# Events Diary



**Schools and Academies Show**  
29 and 30 April 2020,  
ExCeL, London  
<https://bit.ly/31GzGAI>

**nasen SEND Casework Award**  
16 March 2020 - 12 January 2021  
The only on-the-job training and accreditation written specifically for those directly involved in SEND casework.  
<https://bit.ly/30Hyb4E>

## MANCHESTER

**NAHT Leading on SEND Across All Schools Conference – ‘Looking behind, beneath and beyond the behaviour’**  
20 March 2020,  
Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Manchester  
<https://bit.ly/2PeJzAG>

**TES SEN North Show – ‘Empowering the wider SEN community’**  
24-25 April 2020,  
Convention Complex, Manchester Central  
<https://bit.ly/33v2U5t>

**NAHE Leadership Conference**  
18-19 June 2020,  
Manchester,  
Leadership conference for those within the hospital education sector. Over two days, colleagues from settings across the country will meet to discuss key areas and to share ideas and best practice.  
<https://bit.ly/2NGIH6P>

## BIRMINGHAM

**British Dyslexia Association: Screening for Dyslexia pre-16**  
12 March 2020,  
Suitable for senior managers, teachers, TAs/LSAs in primary and secondary education who want to explore different screening methods used to identify dyslexic tendencies.  
<https://bit.ly/2R8iz7a>

**Dyslexia Show 2020**  
Free to attend  
20-21 March 2020,  
NEC, Birmingham  
Focuses on the awareness and understanding of dyslexia in education, parenting and the workplace.  
[www.dyslexia-show.co.uk](http://www.dyslexia-show.co.uk)

**nasen Live!**  
3 July 2020,  
Vox Conference Centre, Birmingham.  
The popular one-day SEND CPD conference and exhibition is a must-attend for anyone working with or caring for children and young people with SEND. Don't forget, Gold members go free.  
<https://bit.ly/3aljrN8>



## LANCASHIRE

**Student-led conference – Inclusion in the Modern Day**  
26 March 2020,  
University of Cumbria, Lancaster  
Exploring how inclusion is viewed in modern society. Visiting speakers including Brahm Norwich, Sally Tomlinson and Jonathan Rix.  
<https://bit.ly/37e8s6b>

## YORKSHIRE

**Concept Training: Building relationships with people who have Autism or profound learning disabilities and complex needs**  
20 March 2020,  
Doncaster  
Suitable for anyone working with people with autism or Severe Learning Difficulties of any age.  
<https://bit.ly/38dtH8m>

**NAPLIC Conference 2020 – ‘Developmental Language Disorder: Moving Forward Together’**  
21 March 2020,  
Sheffield City Hall  
Special rate for Yorkshire SENCOs.  
<https://bit.ly/2PYfrdK>

## LONDON

**SEBDA National Conference – ‘Their Future is not Over’**  
27 March 2020,  
Friends House, London  
SEBDA promotes the social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people. The conference will include six workshops presenting recent research, best practice and practical support.  
<https://bit.ly/376OxGc>

## EXETER

**SEND Conference – ‘All in this Together: Making SEND Everybody’s Business’**  
4 June 2020,  
Sandy Park, Exeter  
A range of workshops, including Ofsted preparation around Intent, Implementation and Impact. Also suitable for SEND governors.  
<https://bit.ly/2v6nGw5>

**British Dyslexia Association: Screening for Dyslexia pre-16**  
20 May 2020  
Suitable for senior managers, teachers, TAs/LSAs in primary and secondary education who want to explore different screening methods used to identify dyslexic tendencies.  
<https://bit.ly/2R8iz7a>





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*Parent who took part in the EarlyBird Plus programme*



**Find out more:**  
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*"It's such a calming environment and I have noticed that the students are much calmer and more engaged."*

Manager, Cambian Pengwern

*"Our pupils feel valued and like the roominess and light of their new learning space. The cedar building also has a warmth that is hard for them to put into words but, basically, they feel comfortable."*

Headteacher, Priory Rossendale School

*"It's been amazing how it's transformed the way we work as a school and what the boys are getting out of it. I am really excited about its future."*

Principal, Swalcliff Park



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