

Quality First Teaching & supporting low ability students

**Guilden Sutton Church of England
Primary School**



Love and Justice For All

“No matter what your ability, effort is what ignites that ability and turns it into accomplishment.”

Carol Dweck—Mindset

The 'SEN Code of Practise: 0-25 Years' says that before considering if a child has a Special Educational Need the 'first response' to a pupil making less than expected progress should be 'high quality teaching targeted at their area of weakness'

The purpose of this booklet is to support you with your own classroom strategies which promote that **quality first teaching** for students with a variety of different needs. It will also give you ideas on how you might adapt your practise and class-work to support those who may need more support to access learning than the majority.

Remember:

IF IT DOESN'T BENEFIT THE STUDENT IT ISN'T WORTH DOING

Whilst we are putting these strategies in place we must remember that we are responsible for ensuring students can access the work in lessons **HOWEVER** we need to encourage all students to be independent learners.

Encourage and praise **EFFORT**—students who have difficulties will certainly have low self-esteem. We have to make sure we praise the effort as well as the achievement, with maximum effort they **WILL** make progress. By praising the effort students will feel a sense of achievement and this in turn will help build confidence in themselves.

(For more information: Carol Dweck: Growth Mindset—The New Psychology of Success)

Promoting growth mindset:

Instead of...	Try thinking...
I give up / I can't do it	I can use a different strategy / I am going to train my brain
Its good enough / I can't do better	Is this really my best effort? How can I improve this?
This is too hard	This might take me a bit longer to master
I will never be clever	I can learn how to do this
My plan A didn't work	There is always a plan B
My friend can do it	I will learn from them, ask them how they did it

Promoting independent learners:

- Use 3 b4 me strategies—use your *brain*/refer to your *book*/ask a *buddy*...ask the *boss*!
- Set up a 'how-to' resource book for frequently asked questions/tasks
- Encourage students to lead the learning and to share their own resources
- Ensure resources are clearly accessible and easily organised.
- Model learning and what 'high achieving' work looks like
- Ensure that success criteria/expectations are clear
- Encourage students to identify each others successes, and how to make improvements
- Use high level questioning to encourage real dialogue about a subject (Blooms Taxonomy)
- Ask pupils how they think they might approach a problem/task

ADHD – Quality First Teaching

DESCRIPTION

ADHD stands for “Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder”. These are children who most of the time have difficulty in paying attention and whose behaviour is overactive and impulsive. ADHD is a medical condition with a medical diagnosis. Treatment may involve medication or behavioural therapy.

STRATEGIES

- Sit near the teacher, within the class setting and surround with good role models.
- Reduce the amount of changes/disruptions as far as possible.
- Give one task at a time and monitor progress.
- Have pre-established consequences for good and bad behaviour and stick to them. Work with the pupil to determine these.
- Use a timer to measure and extend time on task.
- Allow pupil to scribble, draw, squeeze stress ball whilst you talk, or something that will allow them to fiddle (but only if they can do this sensibly)— encourage highlighting, underlining.
- Use ‘post its’ for questions and ideas rather than interrupt.
- Do a stop – 10 second count before hand up/speaking.
- Stay calm and clear if pupil’s behaviour is poor.
- Reinforce positive behaviour and establish a system to signal good and bad.
- Control size and members of any group work – begin with positive peer buddy.
- Give a set time for writing and do not extend into break time – your pupil will need these breaks.
- Use pupil’s name and give eye contact before giving instructions.
- Chunk instructions and support with visual cues.
- Check regularly that the pupil is on task.
- Give the student credit for any improvement and efforts made.
- Give the student credit for the amount of time and effort spent on work
- Consider marking the student’s correct answers instead of their mistakes.
- Keep parents informed about upcoming tests and assignments.
- Support with organisation reminders—is work written in planner / can they take a picture of homework written on board so they have a record.

ASD - Quality First Teaching

DESCRIPTION

Autism, or “Autistic Spectrum Disorders” (ASD) as the condition is officially known, is considered to be a disorder of development, characterised by impairment of language, communication and social interaction, rigidity of thought and behaviour, poor motor co-ordination and sensory perceptual differences.

STRATEGIES

- Students with ASD are individuals—the spectrum is broad and they will have many different needs depending on the individual
- Use the pupil’s name before giving instructions.
- An individual workstation can be helpful if they struggle socially.
- Give explicit, clear instructions, in the order of doing (may need to be only 1 instruction at a time). Ask the pupil to repeat the instructions.
- Don’t use phrases such as ‘Do you want to?’, ‘Shall we.....?’, as they may be taken as an option to refuse participation.
- Use visual cues to make verbal information meaningful.
- Give examples of completed work so that pupil knows intended outcome or can parallel model.
- Break task down into meaningful parts.
- Give explicit work targets which are achievable and shared with pupil.
- Make initial eye contact, but do not expect to maintain it. Don’t ask for them to look at you when talking, this will be very difficult for them, it is not defiance.
- Allow the child time to think.
- Develop clear predictable routines. Give notice if there is a room change / supply teacher etc.
- Language is taken literally, so abstract language will need to be explained at the time of use e.g its raining ‘cats and dogs’.
- There will be a need for rules for listening, talking, turn taking, sharing, waiting, working with others, starting, finishing etc.
- Pupil needs to sit where the teacher can discretely assist and in a place free of distractions.
- Check homework, and when it has to be in, has been written down and pupil understands what is to be done.
- Never punish students with ASD for behaviours that are part of their disability, for example, avoidance of eye contact; talking to self; slow response time; lack of respect for others; repeating words or phrases; upset in crowd or with noise; anxiety; persevering on topics of interest; upset caused by change.
- Provide preparation for new topic vocabulary where possible so they are aware of key terms.

Concentration difficulties - Quality First Teaching

DESCRIPTION

Concentration issues may come hand in hand with other needs, for example, ADHD. The student may find it difficult to maintain focus for an extended period of time, or may be easily distracted by others around them. Poor concentration may also be an indication of other issues, such as literacy difficulties if a student cannot access the work, or even poor hearing or vision.

STRATEGIES

- Seating plans should take into account the best place to sit—away from distraction (chatty friends / windows etc.)
- Tasks should be short with clear expectations
- Use of a timer to complete tasks (egg timer / digital timer on desk—you have 5 mins to complete task)
- Very short and clear explanations of task
- Break lessons into 4 or 5 short activities where possible
- Re-focus tasks as lesson goes on—or re-focus student individually every 5/10 minutes—what have you done so far, next you should...
- Ensure they understand task—ask them to repeat task back (or use visual prompt—'now.... / next....' so they are clear what they need to do.
- Use visual checklists for lesson beginnings and ending—tick list that student can tick off when each task is complete
- Lots of praise for effort—have they been able to achieve set target of work?
- Normal sanctions for insufficient work (unless otherwise agreed)

Dyscalculia - Quality First Teaching

DESCRIPTION

Dyscalculia is a specific learning disability literally “ difficulty with mathematics “.

Identifying dyscalculic learning difficulties.

1 Number :

Difficulty linking words with numbers.

Difficulty transferring from concrete to abstract ideas.

Difficulty with place value, sequences, time, money, counting backwards

2 Memory:

Difficulty holding ideas long enough to make sense of a task or question.

3 Language:

Difficulty understanding maths terms and abbreviations.

Difficulty with worded maths problems

4 Work:

The pupils work is often messy. Numbers sometimes reversed. Columns don't line up.

STRATEGIES

- Provide concrete objects to aid calculation. Age appropriate bricks, blocks, counters.
- Play maths games
- At the beginning of each topic, use word banks displayed on the wall in alphabetical order
- Provide a list of maths symbols (as we do with punctuation)
- Provide photocopies of copying from the board
- Use calculator
- Praise and reward- reduce anxiety associated with maths.

DYSPRAXIA— Quality First Teaching

DESCRIPTION

The word “dyspraxia” comes from the Greek words “dys” meaning bad and “praxis”, meaning action or deed. Dyspraxia is also known as Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD). It has been described as a “difficulty getting our bodies to do what we want when we want them to do it”, a difficulty that can be considered significant when it interferes with the normal range of activities expected of a child of their age. Dyspraxia can adversely affect speech and language, fine motor control and gross motor coordination.

STRATEGIES

- Give the student as much encouragement as possible.
- Be aware that handwritten work may cause frustration.
- Ensure that the student’s pen and pencil grip is comfortable
- Offer alternative ways of recording work—laptop / word pad / use of mind maps / story boards etc / Dictaphones.
- Allow extra time to complete tasks, particularly where there is lengthy writing, technical drawing etc.
- Do not provide too many verbal or visual instructions at once.
- Give step by step instructions and check they are understood.
- If necessary, place simple written instructions on the student’s desk.
- Sit the student near the board.
- Use checklists and story planners.
- Allow access to computer technology.
- Use lined paper with margins to allow student to consider how to set out their writing.
- In Mathematics, use squared paper.
- In PE a new skill may have to be fully demonstrated before the student can perform the task.
- They may struggle with getting changed quickly before and after PE.
- In hands on subjects they may need support to manipulate equipment.

HEARING IMPAIRMENT— Quality First Teaching

DESCRIPTION

Hearing impairment (HI) ranges from mild hearing loss to total deafness. Now and again a teacher working for the local authority's HI service tests students with HI to determine whether their hearing with or without a hearing aid falls within normal limits. The school subsequently receives a report with a hearing score and advice about seating the student in the classroom and supporting his/her access to the curriculum.

STRATEGIES

- Make sure that hearing aid users are wearing their hearing aids.
- Ask students where they would like to sit to optimise communication, making sure they are near the teacher and away from heavy traffic areas.
- Always face students and get their attention before speaking.
- Use facial expressions, gestures and other body language to communicate.
- Repeat new vocabulary in different contexts to reinforce your message.
- Use visual aids since vision is the primary means of receiving information.
- Provide information about assignments, deadlines, exam dates etc in writing.
- Write all homework assignments and class instructions on the whiteboard, making sure that anything you write can be easily read, and refrain from talking while you are writing.
- Reduce background noise: sounds normally ignored by hearing individuals are amplified by a hearing aid and interfere with communication.

Memory Difficulties — Quality First Teaching

DESCRIPTION

Poor memory is often a result of another need, for example, students with dyslexia or a speech and language difficulty will often have difficulty with either retaining information or retrieving information. Poor working memory (for example the ability to hold information in your head and manipulate it mentally) can often be mistaken for low intelligence. Poor working memory impacts students as they need this on a daily basis for a variety of tasks in school such as following instructions or remembering what to write down.

STRATEGIES

- Give clear instructions in short chunks—no more than 2 at a time
- Use visual task list to allow student to tick off once task is complete
- Use short tasks, and refocus after 5 minutes to ensure the student knows what to do
- ‘Chunk’ information into 2 or 3 pieces maximum
- Allow for repetition and practise - repeat key points
- In order for information to be stored to long term memory the information needs to be linked to something meaningful—link to existing topics / information / create vivid personal examples that students can relate to, this will help recall in the future
- Use mnemonics to help remember e.g. Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain—allow students to create their own - perhaps even draw pictures to link to them.
- Make visual records of ideas and key words—use mind maps
- Record ideas and listen back to them to help revise
- Make key word cards with definitions—use at beginning of lessons to revise key ideas—keep it short and sharp and revise them every so often to help store in long term memory
- Use cards - write question on one side/answer on the other—ask students to test each other.

Organisation Difficulties— Quality First Teaching

DESCRIPTION

Organisation difficulties can be part of a number of difficulties. Particularly dyslexia/ dyspraxia/ADHD. You need to be aware that being disorganised could be a result of a more complex need.

STRATEGIES

- Monitor homework planner to make sure homework is written in—or print off homework to be stuck in / write in planner
- Allow students to take a picture of homework written on the board so parents have accurate recording of homework
- Prompting them with the more difficult tasks or breaking them down to organise ideas
- Establish clear routines for handing in work / homework
- Establish clear routines for lessons
- Provide folder for worksheets / time to stick in book
- Check student has access to materials needed to do homework.
- Use prompt sheet / reminders for tasks so student knows how to approach a task

Reading difficulties — Quality First Teaching

STRATEGIES

- Hear student read discretely if necessary to gauge accessibility of texts
- Provide easier texts if necessary—shorter sentences, plenty of pictures, difficult words explained
- Give reading practise of texts before embarking on task
- Where necessary provide alternative means of accessing texts. E.g. listen to recording / pair with more able peer
- Provide and discuss definitions of subject specific key words - display or provide key words list for the lesson/topic.
- On board write large and clearly, change colours every new idea if possible (to help students find and follow ideas more easily).
- Have on the board only the information needed for the lesson
- Use pictures / role play / videos—not just reading.
- When reading a large amount of texts, encourage students to use different coloured highlighters. One could be to highlight who, one for when, one for why etc. This then allows the student to find answers more easily and break down the text.
- Rather than having students read to the whole class, encourage paired reading so that students read to each other.
- If students do read to the class, tell them that if there is a word they don't know, they can miss it out and carry on.

Spelling difficulties — Quality First Teaching

STRATEGIES

- Provide copies of notes rather than asking student to take notes—they may miss out key points or not be able to read back what they have written
- Provide key word lists
- Display key words / topic words so they are accessible in lessons
- Allow students to record their work in different ways e.g. voice recorder / parents scribe / use of laptop
- Mark 'target' spellings only – these might be key words / or high frequency words.
- Correct spellings of these selected words (focus on errors which are unintelligible or are very common words) Don't correct every error (disheartening) and don't ignore all errors (prevents progress)
- Allow time for students to check their spelling / ensure they can use spell check if they are on laptop
- Support them using dictionaries (make sure they are confident to use them)
- Encourage strategies where they are able to try—sounding out words / dividing into syllables for longer words

SPLD — Quality First Teaching

DESCRIPTION

A student with a specific learning difficulty (SpLD) is as able as any other student, except in one or two areas of their learning. For instance, they may find it difficult to recognise letters, or to cope with numbers or reading. There are many different types of SpLD, but the best known is probably **dyslexia**. In dyslexia, the child has difficulty with written symbols. Although these students are generally intelligent, they have difficulty with reading, spelling and organisation. It may be difficult for parents and teachers to realise that a child has this sort of problem, especially if their development has appeared quite normal in the early years. Other types of SpLD are **dysgraphia** (writing difficulty), **dyspraxia** (motor difficulties) and **dyscalculia** (difficulty with mathematical calculations).

STRATEGIES

- Avoid approaches that have not worked in the past and recognise that processing difficulties will not be overcome by practice
- Allow extra time to complete tasks and tests
- Teach basic skills in context, using learners' own written work
- Encourage students to identify their own strategies, e.g. mnemonics, learning by doing, so that they become independent learners
- Encourage learners to make visual representations of information, such as mind maps
- Use alternative tasks to writing, e.g. charts, labelled diagrams, matching activities.
- Use pair/group work.
- Limit written responses to key points only.
- Provide writing frames to aid organisation and recall of content as well as reduce written requirements.
- Provide visual reminders of writing needs and routines, e.g. check/add punctuation, underlining.
- Provide text for reading as an alternative to copying tasks.
- Use word banks on wall – in alphabetical order.
- Have alphabet strip/cue cards stuck to desk
- Provide visual cued key word lists for task, topic and subject.
- Use word banks, personal wordbooks, spellcheckers.
- Respond to pupil's work in a positive way. Do not penalise for errors
- Use technology to support the development of basic skills and as an alternative means of curriculum access.
- Give information in small chunks. Repeat key points. Provide visual reinforcement.
- Present instructions in small steps. Use flow charts, task boards.
- Reduce homework to essential and manageable tasks. Write instructions for pupil.
- Praise, praise, praise. Provide 'pack up and sort out' time.
- Avoid black text on white background – buff or coloured paper is easier to read

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT—Quality First Teaching

DESCRIPTION

The term “visual impairment” (VI) refers to anyone who is blind or partially sighted, rather than those who are short-sighted (myopia), or long-sighted (hyperopia).

STRATEGIES

- Most students with VI prefer a high level of lighting, but some need reduced or shaded light.
- Avoid glare from light reflected onto a shiny work surface or glossy book.
- Do not stand in front of an unshaded window when talking to a visually impaired student.
- Some students experience difficulty when moving from a well lit into a dimly lit environment and they will need time for their eyes to adjust.
- A student with VI should be near the front but not facing the window.
- The student may need to move to adjust to changing light conditions.
- Bags, coats, lunch boxes etc. should not be left lying about the floor.
- Tilted chairs and doors left ajar are hazardous.
- Never expect visually impaired pupils to share books or worksheets.
- Clean the board regularly to maintain maximum contrast.
- Verbalise what is being written on the board, making it clear what should be written down if additional remarks are made.
- Ensure that there is no glare or reflection on the whiteboard.
- Give as many first-hand, “real”, multi-sensory experiences as possible.
- Tone of voice is more meaningful than facial expression.

Moderate Learning Difficulty / Low ability

Quality First Teaching (general)

DESCRIPTION

The majority of students with special educational needs have Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), which means they have general developmental delay. They do not find learning easy, which affects their self-esteem and may result in poor behaviour. They have short attention spans, present difficulties with basic literacy and numeracy and their reasoning and coordination skills are underdeveloped.

STRATEGIES

- Keep it simple—focus on main points of topics
- Teach key words—provide key word lists/ bookmarks to use in lessons
- Praise EFFORT and ACHIEVEMENT
- Use differentiated worksheets, word banks, writing frames and ICT software
- Allow extra time to complete tasks and tests
- Improve self-esteem by building on students' strengths and interests
- Break down new tasks into bitesize chunks with plenty of opportunities for reinforcement
- Make sure that every lesson's learning objectives are realistic and allow some success to be experienced
- Check understanding, building supportive relationships and using appropriate praise, encouragement and questioning to ensure participation
- Keep tasks short, build in variety and repeat information in different ways - repetition is key, you will need to 'overlearn' by referring back to what has been done already.
- Establish what students already knows about a topic and be prepared to go back to the point where their knowledge is secure
- Show the student what to do as well as talking about it, giving concrete examples.
- Allow students to explain back to you to check understanding
- If a student wants to answer a question allow them, where possible, to answer first otherwise other students will usually give their answer. Ask another student to expand on it.
- Focus on big picture success, rather than word or spelling accuracy i.e. encourage 'thinking', not just 'reading' accuracy – in the right context 'butifull' is much better than 'nice'
- Often some students feel overwhelmed by having to write essay type answers to show their knowledge. Alternative methods of assessment could be:
 - ⇒ Mind maps showing who, what, why, where, when and how. These could include pictures with some words
 - ⇒ Bullet points of the main points
 - ⇒ Storyboards including pictures and captions
 - ⇒ Table showing what, why, where, when and how
 - ⇒ Use of dictation machines to record ideas (I pad app 'Dragon Dictate')






Moderate Learning Difficulty/Low Ability Quality First Teaching (maths)

STRATEGIES

- Link maths to relevant and practical contexts – shopping, eating out etc.
- Use a 'scaffolding' approach – avoid rushing the student through a task. Break it down into steps. Provide time for recap & consolidation at each stage and revisit the basic skills often.
- Allow students as much thinking time as they need to complete a task or calculation, including oral / mental work. Avoid putting them on the spot by asking a question in front of an audience of peers.
- Minimise the amount of information that students have to hold in their mind at any one time. For example, if they are performing long division problems, they should write down every step including carrying numbers. When solving word problems, they should always have a scrap piece of paper handy and write down the steps in their calculations. This will help prevent them from losing their place and forgetting what they are doing.
- Use a variety of visual and kinaesthetic resources – objects, images and models. Allow the students to manipulate the resources.
- Use a variety of methods and try to adapt teaching to the student's natural way of working out rather than simply imposing the method you have learnt / use frequently etc.
- Provide a list of maths symbols – as you would with punctuation – to remind students.
- Provide number squares and prepared formats for recording calculations / answers – with shaded alternate rows.
- Provide help/cue cards for different operations – colour code for categories i.e. blue for subtraction, red for addition. Vary the vocabulary, for example, colour code blue 'minus', take away' etc.
- Use small numbers when introducing new concepts. Gradually work up to higher numbers via short, small step tasks.
- Take time to explain /recap on maths vocabulary. Check for understanding.
- Play games with students to teach the points you want the students to learn. (AA team have selection of resources to support you)
- Ask lots of questions, rephrasing your sentences and varying your vocabulary.
- Encourage students to talk about what they are doing and why.
- Establish a routine of 'estimate – calculate – check'.

Encouraging thinking skills

Questioning : Blooms Taxonomy

 EVALUATION	Judge / test / critique / defend / criticise / prioritise / explain if you agree
 SYNTHESIS	Design / build / predict/ infer / solutions for / produce / invent / plan
 ANALYSIS	Categorise / examine / compare & contrast / classify / evidence / outline
 APPLICATION	Use / Diagram / Make a chart / Draw / apply / Solve / Calculate / Why is
 COMPREHENSION	Re-tell / Interpret / Summarise / Explain / Discuss / Main idea of / Brief outline of
KNOWLEDGE	Who? What? Where? When? How? Describe / What is / Find / Name / Identify / Define

Differentiation—The ‘magnificent 7’ strategies:

OUTCOME	Different results from the same given task
SUPPORT	LSA support in class
INPUT	Focussing teaching input in lesson to students who have not ‘got it’
ACCESSIBILITY	Considering seating / technology / equipment to access lesson
PACE	Extra time to complete work / chunking lesson into smaller activities
QUESTIONING	Blooms taxonomy (above)
TASK	Consider how you present info to students and how they present their work