Understanding Inclusion

This guide is for SENCOs, school leaders (including governors), teachers and support staff

Leading Learning for Special Educational Needs & Disability

National Award for SEN Coordination Provider Partnership

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The SENCO role in relation to inclusion

A sense of belonging is vital to children and young people's well-being. The SENCO must be qualified to advise teachers about appropriate differentiation and ways to support learners to overcome barriers to learning and participation.

This mini guide will help you consider your position with regard to **inclusion** in your setting. In terms of inclusion, the SEND Regulations 2014 state 'in relation to each of the registered pupils who have special educational needs' the SENCO must 'promote the pupil's inclusion in the school community and access to the school's curriculum, facilities and extra-curricular activities.'

> **The SENCO will lead on inclusion in your setting.**

They will lead by example, modelling commitment to include all children and young people and develop the understanding of colleagues, families, and learners.

Consider these questions and note down your responses to them:

- How would you articulate your vision for inclusion in your setting?
- How are your values shared across the setting?
- How do you demonstrate your commitment to the principles of inclusion?
- How do you review inclusive practice?
- How do you measure how inclusive we are?
- How is inclusion policy and practice quality assured?

1 Defining inclusion

Some people consider inclusion in terms of including children and/or young people with special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) in a mainstream setting. Some people view it as encompassing all additional needs. Others see it in the widest sense as providing a sense of belonging for **all** members of the school community. Others see Special Schools as inclusive. All members of the setting are included and there is no discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, religion, language, ethnicity and social class.

- How would you define inclusion?
- Are you clear as to your own views on inclusion?
- Is there a shared vision for inclusion across the school?
- How do you know?

The context

Inclusion in education is not a new idea. Some people believe that it stems from a time when the Education (Handicapped Children) Act 1970 introduced the requirement that children, previously deemed to be ineducable, should receive an education.

A milestone in the development of inclusive education was *The Salamanca Statement* (1994): https://bit.ly/3e3alXa.

The first Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (SEN) was published in 1994. This was followed by a revised Code in 2001 that took a more social interactive approach to SEN.

The then Labour government built on this in the 1990s when they committed to pursue a policy of inclusion in education, for example, by commissioning and disseminating the *Inclusion Development Programme*.

Excellence in Schools was published in 1997 and outlined the Government's vision for inclusion in education:

'Where pupils do have special educational needs there are strong educational, social and moral grounds for their education in mainstream schools. Our policy for schools will be consistent with our commitment to rights for disabled people more generally. But we must always put the needs of the child first, and for some children specialist, and perhaps residential, provision will be required, at least for a time. That is compatible with the principle of inclusive education. Specialist facilities can also become a resource for supporting mainstream placements. This will mean planning on a cross-LEA and regional basis, to ensure that specialist support

services are available, with a reasonable spread of provision across the country' (DfEE, 1997:34).

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) is an internationally agreed legal framework to ensure the human rights of people with disabilities. The United Kingdom signed this in 2009. Article 24 outlines the rights of children and young people who are disabled to an education including 'individualised support measures are provided in environments that maximise academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion'.

The Equality Act 2010 (https://bit.ly/39NJA5K) strengthened the Government's commitment to social justice and inclusion. The principles of the Act are to ensure the rights of individuals are protected and that equality of opportunity is made available to all people. It seeks to eliminate discrimination and outlines the duties of public sector organisations which includes early years settings, schools, and colleges.

In 2015, UNESCO published *A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education* which forms part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are aimed at eradicating poverty. The SDG aims to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' (UNESCO, 2015:2): https://bit.ly/2yBz7NN. It states that 'inclusion and equity are overarching principles that should guide all educational policies, plans and practices, rather than being the focus of a separate policy' (UNESCO, 2015:18).

- Are all staff familiar with the legislative framework for SEN and inclusion?
- How have you been involved in designing an inclusive curriculum?

2 Leading on inclusive practice

The first step in the leadership of inclusive teaching involves the SENCO alongside the senior leadership team (SLT) working with all stakeholders to create a shared understanding of what is meant by inclusive practice and inclusive teaching.

The Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2016) supports leadership teams to create a shared vision of what an inclusive ethos means in their setting by providing a framework and materials to support schools in developing an inclusive culture. All staff should work together, taking account of pupil voice, to consider how inclusive practices can be developed and sustained.

The Strategic Leadership of Inclusion: The SENCO role

With regard to the strategic leadership of inclusion, the vision and values a school adopts should not solely be the responsibility of the SENCO, but rather should be led by a school's SLT and be owned by everyone. Thus, as a school's population changes, so will their strategic leadership of inclusion adapt and develop. The subjective nature of inclusion and the lack of one agreed definition (Armstrong, Armstrong and Sandagou, 2010) means a setting will need to develop its own inclusive identity, thinking about what values and practices are most relevant to their unique population.

The need for school leaders to develop shared inclusive values and policies is also outlined in paragraph 29 of the Ofsted inspection framework:

> **Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education and training to all. This is realised through strong, shared values, policies, and practice**
> **(Ofsted, 2019:11).**

- Is the SLT aware of the Department for Education recommendations that the SENCO should be part of the SLT?
- Does the SLT create time/ space for the notion of inclusion to be discussed and a shared understanding to be agreed upon?
- Is SEND embedded within development plans and CPD planning?
- Do you and other practitioners view the SENCO as a leader?
- Is there a strategic approach in your setting?
- Do colleagues recognise their responsibilities?
- How do staff recognise their responsibility?
- What are your leadership values?
- How do you work with the leadership team?

Intent, Implementation and Impact

The table below is designed to help you frame the strategic leadership of inclusion around the three key areas of intent, implementation and impact (Ofsted, 2019).

Whole School SEND have produced a suite of review guides which can be accessed for free at https://bit.ly/2JLdo8u.

Intent	– Establish a shared vision for inclusion which directly relates to your setting's population. – Establish the policies which outline your setting's vision and mission for inclusion (remember that inclusion should not sit in isolation in one policy, but to be effective should be embedded in many). – Audit your inclusive practice.
Implementation	– Work collaboratively to define the strategic actions required to address your setting's inclusive vision and achieve your policies for inclusion; this includes listening to the voices of children as well as adults. – Implement approaches which align with your setting's vision for inclusion. – Engage in continual professional development (at all levels) where relevant.
Impact	– Achieve improved outcomes for children on the SEND register (remember to consider 'outcomes' in the broadest sense of the word, not limiting their construction to attainment in literacy and numeracy).

3 Language and labelling

Education is irresistibly drawn to categorising learners and pigeon-holing them with labels such as Special Educational Needs/non-Special Educational Needs, Pupil Premium/Non-Pupil Premium, Disadvantaged and so on, with some children falling into multiple groups.

In part, the education system creates the situation where labels are required to access resources and funding. Assessment data is interrogated according to areas and types of additional need, to ensure no groups are at risk of underachievement. However, labels can also enable people to understand an individual's needs. The dilemma is that people may see the label first and not the person. In your setting, do you use identity-first or person–first language? For example, have you ever considered whether to make it school policy to use one or the other or do you use them interchangeably? Would you use SEN child/young person (identity first) or child/young person with SEN (person first) in a policy document?

The use of labels might also lead to the generation of pre-conceptions and stigmatisation. As a leader on inclusion, the SENCO is able to influence the values, culture and ethos of a setting. By thinking carefully about the language used in school, attitudes can be challenged, and generalisations avoided.

- Have you taken time to reflect upon the nature of language and its use?
- Is there a shared understanding and agreement of language and how it is used?
- Does pupil voice inform language and terminology used?
- How is language used in policy documents? Does the language used convey your views on inclusion?
- What language used in your setting might marginalise or stigmatise individuals or groups?
- How and why have you designed your inclusive curriculum?
- How do you use language in policies to reflect inclusion?
- How do you use language in policies to reflect your vision of inclusion?

4 The Inclusive Learning Environment

The emphasis placed on the environment in the social model of disability (Oliver, 2004) is fundamental to understanding the inclusive learning environment. In the social model of disability, it is the structures of society which are the key focal point, which is in contrast to the medical model of disability where the disabled person is perceived as needing adjustment (Shakespeare and Watson, 2002). Working in the spirit of the social model of disability, the inclusive school/classroom needs to revolve around a rich and diverse learning environment which positively impacts on all learners' outcomes.

Approaches include:
• dyslexia friendly classrooms (Pavey, Meehan and Davis, 2013)
• universal design for learning (CAST, 2018)
• communication friendly spaces (Jarman, 2009)
• Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication related handicapped CHildren (TEACCH) approach (Mesibov, Shea and Schopler, 2005)
• Attachment Aware Schools (https://bit.ly/39Q4Asr)
• Trauma Informed Schools (https://bit.ly/2x3ufAT)

Each method focusses on adjusting the environment so that learners thrive, not with the constant support of an adult, but as independently as possible.

Deppeler (1998) and Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2010) theorise the inclusive learning environment as pertaining to five key elements: physical, materials, resources, instructional strategies and learning outcomes.

• How would someone new to your setting describe the learning environment?
• Which of the five key elements above are addressed to make the environment more inclusive?

5 What does high quality inclusive teaching look like?

The SEND Code of Practice defines high quality teaching as teaching that is 'differentiated and personalised and will meet the individual needs of the majority of children and young people' (DfE and DoH, 2015:25). All children should have access to high quality teaching: 'high quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN' (DfE and DoH, 2015:99). The Code makes it very clear that 'additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching' (DfE and DoH, 2015:99).

The responsibility for the progress and development of all pupils, through access to high quality teaching, lies with class and subject teachers so they need to have a clear understanding of what constitutes high quality teaching. The SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015) emphasises the importance of regularly reviewing the quality of teaching that all pupils receive. This may include support for teachers to improve their understanding of the strategies that can be employed to identify and provide support for pupils.

Research evidence should be used to develop understanding of effective teaching and pedagogical approaches. Husbands and Pearce (2012) What Makes Great Pedagogy references the following:

- consideration of pupil voice
- teachers' behaviour, knowledge and understanding, and beliefs
- building on the prior learning and experience of pupils
- scaffolding of pupil learning
- use of whole class teaching, structured group work, guided and individual learning activities
- development of higher order thinking, metacognition and effective use of questioning
- assessment for learning; inclusive teaching that takes account of the diverse needs of all pupils.

Evidence-informed principles should underpin high quality teaching, as identified by Coe et al (2014). They identify the six core components of great teaching as:
- pedagogical content knowledge
- quality of instruction
- classroom climate (ethos)
- classroom management
- teacher beliefs
- professional behaviours

Adaptive teaching is an important element of high quality teaching. Teachers can modify the content of the teaching and the way in which it is presented to learners. The classroom environment can be adapted to ensure that it includes all learners and while there should be high expectations for all learners, tasks and outcomes can be modified in accordance with teacher knowledge of individual pupils.

High quality teaching requires the following:
- Teachers need to be clear with pupils about what they are learning.
- Modelling and scaffolding allow pupils the opportunity to develop their understanding of what they need to learn, and the steps involved in the learning process. This works best when the planned learning takes account of pupils' prior knowledge and their experience of the world.
- Distributed practice, little and often, allows pupils to practice tasks and to revisit them so that new learning can become embedded.
- Task planners and visuals can support pupils to develop greater independence in their learning.
- Assistive technology can support pupil learning. Pupils should be given time to become familiar with the hardware and software programmes so that they can become competent and can have the opportunity to use these resources to support them as a normal way of working.

High quality teaching should employ a range of whole class, group and independent work, with pupils given the opportunity to work in a range of groups and with peers of different abilities. Fixed ability groupings can limit the expectations of the pupil and teacher and can result in low self-esteem for vulnerable pupils.

The following questions could be used as prompts to assess the extent to which high quality teaching is embedded in practice in your school and to inform support to improve high quality teaching:

- Is teaching carefully planned, using a range of pedagogical approaches to include all learners?
- Do pupils have access to a range of practical resources to support their learning?
- Do teachers have high expectations of all pupils?
- Is the classroom environment organised to facilitate access to resources and strategies to support learning e.g. visual prompts, visual timetables etc?
- Is there an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils?
- Do all pupils have high quality teaching and learning opportunities with a qualified teacher?
- Is there a blend of group, paired and independent learning tasks?
- Are pupils encouraged to develop independent learning skills?
- Are pupils encouraged to self-assess their progress using a range of differentiated methods and resources?

6 Personalising Learning

The problem with normative approaches

Normative views of education are those where the value and achievements in education are viewed as being related to a standardised 'norm', where particular learning objectives are usually related to a specific curriculum programme and a specific view of ability, intelligence and development. Where the success of educational outcomes is measured according to such standardised norms, linked to accountability and performance management, there is a significant risk that diversity in teaching and learning is reduced and consequently, the potential for inclusive approaches (Portelli and Koneeny, 2018). Where normative approaches to education have been taken, attempts to include diverse learners have resulted in approaches of integration, seeking to provide support to develop learners to fit the norm, rather than changing the educational experience to fit the needs of the learner.

> **It can be argued that at the core of inclusive practice is the need to work against traditional inequities by challenging normative approaches**
>
> *(Biesta, 2007)*

The importance of diversity

Learning is ultimately about change, about developing and changing knowledge, skills and experience. Valuing different people, cultures, traditions and beliefs as a way of challenging our current position allows us to expand our horizons and enrich potential for learning. As Ainscow (2005:119) states, an important element of inclusion is, 'learning how to learn from difference'.

Collaboration, empowerment, and personalisation

The SEND Code of Practice emphasises that responsibility for the learning of those with Special Educational Needs is shared and not something to be passed on to the SENCO or a teaching assistant. In order to understand the particular context of learners and enable access to appropriate education, practitioners need not only to work together, but to work with the learner. The learner has unique insight into their own context, which needs to be understood so their educational experience is personally relevant. This approach is one of collaboration (Alila, Maatta and Unsianutti, 2016) between practitioners, the learner and the learner's wider community. Through respectful dialogue (Watson *et al*., 2012) this collaboration can result in learners who not only experience relevant, personalised learning experiences, but become more engaged in their learning and empowered to take responsibility for their own learning.

Personalised learning approaches
It is important to consider how learning is celebrated within the school community in order to reinforce the importance of diverse learning outcomes.

Approaches to promote personalised learning are grounded within collaborative conversations and listening. Practitioners need to enact ways of listening to the learner and learning about their individual context. Consideration needs to be given to what the most appropriate method of communication is for the individual. At times, this can be through another person, ideally chosen by the learner.

The curriculum for the learner needs to be planned in response to these conversations. This may imply a more creative approach to teaching and learning and to include different ways to assess learning.

This personalised approach to learning implies a more flexible or dynamic way of responding to factors for individual learners as well as consideration of factors within the learning environment including, transitions, physical and sensory factors and the social-emotional environment.

The use of individual profiles, which include learners' strengths and needs, and planned strategies and outcomes are included, can be useful approaches to plan, record and track personalised learning approaches.

Further information about personalised learning approaches and Pupil Profiles are available from the nasen resources website at https://bit.ly/2HBiKlK.

SENCOs may also be interested in the person-centred planning approach to Annual Review meetings.

> • What steps can be taken to make personalised learning approaches more practical and achievable for time-stretched class teachers?

7 Intervention and withdrawal versus Inclusion in Class

Finding the balance between educating a child/young person with SEND in class, versus withdrawing them for intervention work is a perennial consideration for SENCOs. There is no one set rule to apply and what is a good idea one term may need changing the next. One salient point to bear in mind, is that no matter how well planned, withdrawing a child/young person from a lesson to take part in an intervention will inevitably result in a learner missing some other part of the learning experience (Webster, Russell and Blatchford, 2016). This does not mean children should not be withdrawn from lessons for intervention work, but it does mean the decision should be thought through very carefully. Based on the research conducted by Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants, the following questions are designed to support you with this decision-making process:

1 Have you spoken with the child/young person to discuss their timetable and how they feel about being withdrawn from lessons to take part in intervention work?

2 Is every effort made to ensure a child/young person is not withdrawn from lessons they particularly enjoy and are motivated by?

3 Is the child/young person's separation from their peers adversely affecting their social relationships with classmates?

4 Have you audited the make-up of a child/young person's timetable to ensure they have access to a broad and balanced curriculum?

5 Is the intervention work relevant to the child/young person and orientated around a goal which can be achieved in a short, focussed period of time?

6 Does the person delivering the intervention have a good understanding of educational pedagogy?

7 Has the person delivering the intervention received the appropriate training?

8 Is the intervention being used as a strategy to support a teacher manage the class, instead of as a strategy to support a child/young person?

9 What measures are taken to ensure learning occurring during intervention classes is transferred into the whole class learning environment?

10 What is the evidence base for the intervention you intend to use?

To find more out about the evidence base of interventions see:
• Education Endowment Foundation: https://bit.ly/2xUZm1A
• Greg Brooks' (2016) What works well for children with literacy difficulties?: https://bit.ly/2x3DUHG

8 Supporting the Inclusive Practitioner

Supporting Practitioners

The wellbeing of practitioners is gaining increasing focus in the context of teacher stress and shortages (Day & Gu, 2014), and increasing policy and media discussions about wellbeing and mental health. In this section, the word 'practitioners' refers to both teachers and other staff in school settings, such as Teaching Assistants, Mentors and Pastoral Staff, all of whom SENCOs are likely to call on to support in some way.

The SENCO Induction Pack (https://bit.ly/3e2kMu1) provides a section on practitioner wellbeing and provides links to a range of resources.

The SEND Reflection Framework (https://bit.ly/2wtxJMI) is an invaluable resource to examine inclusive practice in your setting.

The Inclusive Practitioner

In the context of SEND, in order to promote opportunities for all learners to access appropriate education, the successful inclusive practitioner will have beliefs about the nature of disability and the value and nature of education. Indeed, these attitudes and beliefs are fundamental to successful practice (Jordan, Schwarts & McGhie-Richmond, 2009). The inclusive practitioner will concentrate on developing positive relationships between themselves and the learner (Holingsworth, Dybdahl & Minarik, 1993:8).

Challenges for the Inclusive Practitioner

In our current system, a values-driven approach can often be at odds with policies and practice (Ekins, 2015). The current system is underpinned by a 'standards agenda' (Tomlinson, 2017), which with league tables and targets, narrows the definition of effective and successful education towards norms based on standardised, or normative, goals such as exam results. These age-related success criteria often exclude individual needs and interests which inclusive practitioners promote. This difference can be a significant challenge for inclusive practitioners. The standards agenda can also be seen to have produced a hierarchical and competition-driven culture between schools (Tomlinson, 2017), which can lead to feelings of isolation and vulnerability for inclusive practitioners who already feel at odds with the education system. However, the most recent Ofsted inspection framework encourages schools to consider ways in which the curriculum is broad and inclusive with more emphasis on inspecting schools on what they teach.

• How will you guide your staff through this new way of considering the curriculum?
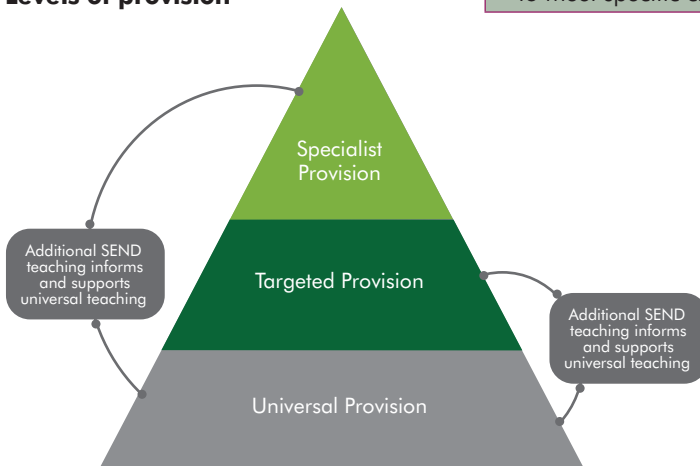
9 Teaching Inclusively

When thinking about teaching inclusively, it is a good idea to start by understanding provision as depicted below. For more information see page 30 of the SENCO Induction Pack https://bit.ly/2XjwdHL

As well as grasping the discrete nature of universal provision, targeted provision and specialist provision, it is also important to understand the relationships between them. It is the connections between these provisions which profoundly influences a school's capability to be inclusive. This is illustrated below in the descriptions of School A and School B:

School A has:
– a comprehensive universal offer which is varied and broad
– a number of relevant and carefully planned targeted provisions
– a small number of specialist provisions which remove barriers for individual children

School B has:
– a limited universal offer
– a number of intervention groups which do not always appear relevant or targeted
– a large number of specialist provisions to meet specific children's needs

Levels of provision

Specialist Provision

Additional SEND teaching informs and supports universal teaching

Targeted Provision

Additional SEND teaching informs and supports universal teaching

Universal Provision

School A needs less specialist provisions than School B because it has an effective universal offer and relevant focussed targeted provisions. School B's practice has inverted the shape of the triangle of provision and so the specialist provisions have become the base of the triangle with the universal provision accounting for only a small proportion of the school's offer.

The effectiveness of a school's universal, targeted and specialist provision has the capacity therefore to increase or decrease the numbers of children a school has on the special educational needs register. This is because the SEND Code of Practice defines special education in terms of required provision(s):

> **A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision that is different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age.**
> *(DfE and DoH, 2015:6.15)*

The SEND Code of Practice outlines the graduated approach as a way of identifying and planning for a learner's needs.

Understanding the subjective nature of the definition of SEN (Ekins, 2015) and realising that different schools implement the graduated approach in very different ways, goes some way to explaining why a child may feel excluded in one setting, but included in another.

- How well do you think your setting implements the graduated approach depicted above?
- Do you think your setting's response to the graduated approach facilitates or precludes inclusive teaching?

Including all Learners
There are a great many strategies you can adopt to enhance the inclusive nature of your school; importantly, whatever strategy you choose needs to align with your strategic vision for inclusion.

SEND Gateway: Inclusion
A search on the word 'inclusion' in the SEND Gateway reveals a wide range of resources to help schools implement inclusion within their setting: https://bit.ly/3aTYJDR

Universal Design for Learning
A universal design for learning focusses on the varied and multiple ways settings can teach and students can learn; as such, the approach will help setting's build their universal provision for learners. Visit https://bit.ly/39XcBMd more information and a downloadable one-page guide:

10 Supporting inclusion through the deployment of additional adults

Making the Best Use of Teaching Assistants (Sharples, Blatchford and Webster, 2016) provides helpful guidance for school leadership teams in supporting inclusion through the use of TAs. Four of the seven recommendations in the report focus on the effective use of the TA in the classroom context:

- TAs should not be deployed in the classroom as an informal teaching resources for pupils with low attainment.
- TAs should not replace the teacher, but rather should add value to what the teacher does.

- TAs should be used to help pupils to take an independent role in their own learning.
- In line with the findings of Blatchford, Russell and Webster (2012, 2015), teaching assistants should be fully prepared for the role that they undertake in the classroom.

The report moves on to make recommendations for the effective use of TAs when delivering structured interventions outside classroom learning. TAs should be used to deliver high quality, structured interventions to individual pupils and small groups of pupils. These structured interventions should be evidence-based. The final recommendation related to the generalisation of the learning from the classroom context and the structured intervention. TAs should support pupils in making connections between what is learned in the classroom and in the intervention.

The deployment of TAs to support inclusion can be informed by the non-statutory Professional Standards for Teaching Assistants (2016). Though non-statutory and non-mandatory, the Standards provide a clear understanding of the role and purpose of the Teaching Assistant in supporting pupil learning. The Standards can also be used to support school leaders to implement an appropriate career development plan for support staff.

The Professional Standards for Teaching Assistants can be found at https://bit.ly/2W9CsMo

Most additional adults deployed in schools are TAs. However, additional adult support may also come from parent volunteers, voluntary workers or students on work experience. Including a wide range of additional adults in the school can support the development of an inclusive, community ethos within the school and can provide access to a broad range of knowledge and skills. Undertaking a knowledge and skills audit with adult volunteers can support more effective deployment to support inclusion. Additional adults should be given access to training and support and the opportunity to see teaching and learning approaches modelled by skilled and experienced teaching staff. They should receive appropriate training to understand the need to develop independence in pupils.

- What support for TAs (training, communication, being part of a team) are in place in your setting?

11 Inclusive approaches to Assessment and Feedback

Formative and Summative Assessment

Formative and summative assessments are frequently presented as different methods of carrying out assessment, however the majority of assessments can be either formative or summative, depending on the way in which learning is conceived and how an assessment is used.

Summative assessment takes place when the assessment sums up learning at the end of a particular episode of learning, such as a topic or a term. Summative assessment generally focusses on attainment and is often linked to standardised levels of learning, such as GCSE grades.

Making assessment and feedback inclusive

An inclusive approach to assessment needs to enable learners to develop in ways which are appropriate and relevant to their own contexts. SENCOs leading on inclusion, could consider the following approaches to develop assessment practice:

1. Using a range of assessments

In order to provide equitable access to learning, a range of assessment approaches and types can be used. This may include approaches such as testing, closed exams, open-book exams, sampling, continuous assessment, coursework, presentations and performances. Other, more creative approaches to understanding learners' development and their next steps could also be considered such as dynamic assessment. By adopting a dynamic approach (Westwood, 2013) to assessment, through responding flexibly to individual learners and choosing appropriate assessment approaches for individual contexts, practitioners can promote more equitable access to learning. By providing a range of creative and dynamic approaches, opportunities can be provided to learners so that they can most effectively demonstrate their skills and learning.

2. Collaborative approaches to assessment

Supporting the development of independent learners is an aspect of inclusion. Through collaborating with learners (Sheehy et al., 2004), practitioners can empower learners to take a more active role in their learning. SENCOs and teachers may consider the use of self-assessment and collaboration with learners in developing assessment approaches, as a way of ensuring assessment practices do not exclude or marginalise learners (Bourke & Mentis, 2013).

3. Respectful approaches to assessment

The key to an inclusive approach to assessment and feedback is that it is underpinned by inclusive values of social justice, the valuing of difference and the desire to provide the best learning opportunities and support for all learners. A respectful approach to assessment (Pugh & Duffy, 2010), where practitioners carefully consider the learner's context, agenda, needs and environment in a holistic and purposeful way, in collaboration with the learner and, where appropriate, their family, will be a firm foundation for an inclusive approach to assessment.

Access arrangements

'Access arrangements' is the term given for the reasonable adjustments made, under the provision of the Equality Act 2010, for learners when taking exams or other assessments (Ofqual, 2018). SENCOs can make use of these arrangements to ensure that learners are given equitable access to assessments. For further information refer to the SENCO Induction Pack, Wharton *et al*. (2019): https://bit.ly/2JRhR9P

Acknowledgements

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TWO DAY COURSE

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Youth Mental Health First Aiders have:

» An in-depth understanding of young people's mental health and factors that affect wellbeing;

» Practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues;

» Confidence to reassure and support a young person in distress;

» Enhanced interpersonal skills such non-judgemental listening;

» Knowledge to help a young person recover their health by guiding them to further support;

» Ability to support a young person with a long-term mental health issue or disability to thrive;

» Tools to look after your own mental wellbeing.

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About the Leading Learning for SEND Community Interest Company: The Provider Partnership

In 2014 the DfE ceased to accredit providers of the NASENCO course. In order to maintain the quality and integrity of the qualification the previously accredited providers joined together to form the NASENCO Provider Partnership. The LLSENDCiC comprises thirty-three providers in all regions of England, including original and new providers, who are now part of the Provider Partnership, with further organisations having their membership pending.
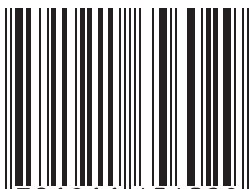
Visit: http://www.nasenco.org.uk/ for more information.

About nasen

nasen is the leading UK professional association embracing all special and additional educational needs and disabilities. The organisation promotes the education, training, development and support of all those working within the special and additional educational needs and disabilities sector. Membership of nasen is an invaluable source of advice, offering an exclusive and vital range of benefits to support teachers, governors, teaching assistants and the entire education support network in the delivery of high-quality inclusive practice.

Visit www.nasen.org.uk for more information about what nasen can do for you.