



# Fearnville

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Supporting Children That May Have  
Special Educational Needs and  
Disabilities (SEND): A Quick Guide for  
Parents and Teachers

# The Graduated Approach



The graduated approach is part of the SEND Code of Practice (2020). It details a way for teachers to develop an understanding of what supports a pupil's needs, helping them to make good progress. The four stages of the cycle are: assess, plan, do and review.

Teachers continually use this approach when they teach all pupils. However, where they suspect that a pupil has SEND or experiences some difficulties in school, they may use the graduated approach to differentiate and refine the way they work with individual pupils. By following this approach, teachers can:

- Individually assess pupils to understand barriers to and gaps in learning
- Continually reflect on a pupils progress

There are four areas in which a pupil may experience additional needs. These are: cognition and learning, communication and interaction, social, emotional and mental health and sensory and physical. This guidance will look at each of these areas in turn and identify what teachers can "do" to help.

# Cognition and Learning

## What does this mean?

Pupils that may require additional help with their cognition and learning needs are likely to learn at a slower pace or struggle with a specific area of the curriculum, such as Reading, Writing or Maths. Pupils with cognition and learning needs may also find it difficult to focus in class or remember what they have been taught, even if they otherwise pick things up quickly.

## What to look out for (assess)...?

- Is the pupil making expected progress with their learning?
- Does the pupil appear more confident in some subjects than they do in others?
- Does the pupil worry about a specific subject or day in school?
- Does the pupil understand what they are expected to do?
- Does the pupil struggle to concentrate in order to complete a task?

## Examples of strategies (plan, then do)...

- Precision Teaching: a very quick, daily intervention which is individualised to plug the gaps in a pupil's learning
- Paired Reading: daily opportunities to read a motivational book that the pupil chooses with an adult or a peer
- Subject specific interventions: there are a number of these running in school and an example could be the "Power of 2" Maths intervention
- Reducing the demands of the task: making the task seem easier or more achievable by presenting it differently (e.g. providing clear boxes for questions and answers rather than having full, blank pages in workbooks)
- Learning breaks: have small breaks throughout the course of the day (e.g. a 5 minute break for every 20 minutes of learning) for the child to re-set themselves and make the most of their time in class
- Busy boxes (for younger pupils): a 10-minute 1:1 intervention exploring a special box filled with motivational tasks (e.g. play dough/Lego, threading, drawing, phonics cards, counting objects) that change approximately every minute to keep the pupil interested
- Pre-teaching concepts: individual or small group opportunities to introduce new learning before it is delivered to the whole class

## What's next (review)...?

Pupils should be set targets that are recorded in an Individual Education Plan (IEP). These targets should be reviewed regularly (at least every 6 weeks) to ensure that pupils make rapid progress which helps teachers to recognise if strategies need to be changed. Where possible, teachers should give parents examples of what they could do at home to help.

# Communication and Interaction

## What does this mean?

Pupils that may require additional help with their communication and interaction needs are likely to find it difficult to communicate with others. It may be that they struggle to understand what others say, do not know what simple words mean or struggle to remember long instructions. This is known as receptive language (what they take in). Additionally, pupils can struggle to form words or sentences and can lack clarity in their speech, making them difficult to understand. This is known as their expressive language (what they say). If pupils find language difficult to understand, this can also affect their relationships with others.

## What to look out for (assess)...?

- Does the pupil have difficulty concentrating when others are talking?
- Is the pupil's speech clear and fluent?
- When you ask a pupil what a word means, can they give you a correct(ish) answer?
- Does the pupil wait a while before giving you an answer, or partly answer a question?
- Does the pupil struggle to understand the expectations of a task?
- Does the pupil speak using clear and complex sentences, using varied language?

## Examples of strategies (plan, then do)...

- Whole class visual timetable: a visual board for the whole class to see and understand what will be happening during the day
- Now and next timetable: a visual, individualised timetable consisting of a two-step approach enabling the pupil to see what will happen now (e.g. Maths) and next (e.g. learning break)
- Blank levels: a 4-step approach used to assess pupil's language skills and provide a clear way of asking questions of differing complexity to allow a pupil's skills to grow
- Reduced demand language: using simple sentences with only a few key words to allow pupil's to understand what they are being asked to do
- Narrating play (for younger pupils): using 1-2 key words explaining what the pupil is playing with (e.g. "red car") or what action they are doing (e.g. "Alex, splash")
- Emphasis on understanding language: ask pupils to write a word they have learnt during the lesson/day on a post-it note (including what it means) and display them on a board in the classroom

## What's next (review)...?

These strategies can be used to support pupils experiencing a wide range of language difficulties and can be differentiated according to the progress they make. Targets should be recorded on an IEP and reviewed regularly (at least every 6 weeks). Example strategies could also be used to support language development in new-to-English (NTE) pupils.

# Social, Emotional and Mental Health

## What does this mean?

Pupils that may require additional help with their social, emotional and mental health needs are likely to express a wide range of issues. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging or disruptive behaviours. Pupils may struggle to understand what emotions are both in themselves and other people. They may also find it difficult to make friendships or play with others.

### What to look out for (assess)...?

- Has the pupil had any changes, big or small, at home, school or elsewhere?
- Is there a change in their overall mood or approach to learning?
- Does the pupil struggle to form and maintain friendships?
- Does the pupil understand how to play with toys and other children?
- What does the pupil say or think about themselves?
- How does the pupil manage strong emotions, such as grief, anger or frustration?
- Does the pupil have any other needs in school which may impact on their wellbeing?

### Examples of strategies (plan, then do)...

- Preventative strategies: daily calming activities, such as Cosmic Kids Yoga, breathing techniques, playing with Lego/play dough, colouring, talking about all feelings
- The Zones of Regulation: an intervention designed to help teach pupils to name, recognise and understand all emotions and provides a “toolkit” to help cope when they experience strong emotions
- Morning meet and greet: time at the start of every day with the same adult to discuss or overcome any worries and set the pupil up for the day
- Buddy system: pairing pupils up with positive peer role models during play times
- Circle of friends: a weekly small group intervention to help pupils understand and form friendships with positive peer role models
- Time out card: a card for pupils to show the teacher they need some time out of class
- Safe place: a special area of the classroom or place in school to calm
- Talking card: a card that pupils can give to teachers to let them know they are feeling upset and need time to talk without having to say this in front of others

### What's next (review)...?

Seeing the impact of additional support in this area may take more time than in others. We should be realistic about targets set and acknowledge that if they work most of the time, but not all, we are having a positive impact on wellbeing. Targets should be worded positively, looking at what we want the pupil to achieve, not what we want them to stop doing or feeling.

# Sensory and Physical

## What does this mean?

Pupils that may require additional help with their sensory and physical needs are likely to need additional physical support or resources to help them in school. Pupils may experience visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI), or have a physical disability. They may become upset in situations that are noisy or busy. Pupils may also experience difficulties with drawing, writing or crafts (fine motor skill activities) or running, climbing and catching a ball (gross motor skill activities). It can also refer to a pupil's independence skills (what they can do for themselves) in toileting, washing and dressing.

## What to look out for (assess)...?

- Does the pupil have an unmet sensory need, such as rocking or chewing?
- Does the pupil present as sensory aversive or find it difficult in noisy or busy places?
- Does the pupil struggle more in P.E in comparison to their peers?
- Does the pupil struggle to do up buttons or write neatly?
- Does the pupil need to wear glasses or a hearing aid?

## Examples of strategies (plan, then do)...

- Movement activities: similar to learning breaks, pupils may need movement/sensory breaks, including activities like running, hopping, jumping, rolling or throwing beanbags into hoops
- Sensory circuits: a small group activity at the start of every day to help pupils burn off any excess energy and help them feel calm and ready for learning (this may include activities similar to those listed above)
- Fine motor skill activities: these are things that will help improve handwriting and self help skills (such as dressing) and include activities like threading, play dough and exercising their fingers
- Gross motor skill activities: these are the things usually see in P.E lessons and pupils may need extra practice with walking over uneven surfaces, running or climbing
- Classroom modifications: the modifications pupils need may be suggested by medical professionals or specialist teachers and could include things like being seated in a particular place or having a specific chair or pen grip
- Individual modifications: the pupil may need to leave a spare pair of glasses or other equipment in school that they also need at home

## What's next (review)...?

Some strategies may not need reviewing as they will be part of on-going support that the pupil requires (e.g. wearing glasses). Others are likely to need longer term input to ensure that sensory and physical needs are met or developed.



# What can I do if I have concerns about my child?

## Step 1: Not to worry or panic

If you feel as if your child is struggling in school for whatever reason, you must not worry or panic. It is completely normal for children to be better at some things than others and they will develop at different rates. If you feel there is a problem, it would be a good idea to make a few notes of your concerns and follow the steps below.

Similarly, if there have been any changes to your home circumstances or your family have experienced something significant, such as a bereavement, it is important to let your child's teacher know so that school can continue to support your child as best they can.

## Step 2: Ask to speak to your child's teacher

Ideally, you should call school and ask to make an appointment to speak with your child's teacher. This will ensure that any conversations you have about your child will be private and confidential. The teacher will be able to tell you what is already happening in school to support your child and involve you in the next cycle of the graduated approach (assess, plan, do review). This is where your written concerns would be helpful and your child's teacher will be able to:

- Advise you what you might be able to do at home and provide resources to do this
- Make any changes based upon your shared concerns
- Make their own assessments about the concerns you have raised if they have not already been noticed in school

## Step 3: Ask to speak to the school's SENDCo

Once you and your child's teacher have carried out a cycle of the graduated approach (assess, plan, do and review), you may wish to seek the advice of the school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo). Your SENDCo is Mrs Adam. Mrs Adam is contactable via the school telephone number 01274 664661 or by asking at reception. A SENDCo is a teacher who has been trained to understand and deal with a number of special educational needs and help teachers to carry out the graduated approach.

Mrs Adam will make an appointment with you to talk through your concerns in depth and advise you as to what options could be taken. You will be able to find more information about this on our website: <https://www.fearnville.bradford.sch.uk/our-school/send>

If the issues you or your child's teacher have raised continue, Mrs Adam will be able to recommend what might help and seek additional support from agencies outside of school, such as a Speech and Language Therapist, Educational Psychologist or Specialist Teacher.