

# Ebbw Fawr Learning Community

ALN information  
2019/2020

CONFIDENTIAL



## Additional Needs Policy 2019/2020

Ebbw Fawr Learning Community is based at 'The Works' site in Ebbw Vale. Day to day running is the responsibility of the Director Mr Huw Lloyd. There are 935 students based on the secondary site. The secondary site includes 16 students who have statements of ALN, 148 students at School Action Plus on the SEN Code of Practice and 58 students at School Action on the SEN Code of Practice. Students with Statements of Special Educational Needs comprise of 1.7% of the secondary school population. Students with some form of ALN at statement, SA+ or SA level comprise of 22% of the secondary school population. There are a total of 222 pupils currently assigned to the ALN register at the EFLC secondary phase.

### Additional Learning Needs information

Ebbw Fawr currently has 222 students actively receiving ALN Support at SA, SA+ and Statemented level. This is 24% of our whole school cohort and significantly above national average.

|              | Statement | SA+                  | SA        | Total      |
|--------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Year 7       | 1         | 14                   | 22        | 37         |
| Year 8       | 3         | 14                   | 10        | 27         |
| Year 9       | 7         | 40                   | 12        | 59         |
| Year 10      | 3         | 38                   | 10        | 51         |
| Year 11      | 2         | 42                   | 4         | 48         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>148</b>           | <b>58</b> | <b>222</b> |
| LRB Pupils   | 12        | 8 (diagnosis of ASD) | N/A       | 20         |

ALN pupils are supported by a team of 7 Learning Support Assistants who receive regular training in supporting pupils with ALN. Students benefit from a wide range of support interventions to address a wide range of needs. The LA recently completed an independent audit of the ALN department at EFLC secondary phase and they stated "The ALN department provides excellent information to staff about pupil needs and suggestions as to how best support them in class... A particular strength of the school is the skills and knowledge base of the ALN department and the staff's relationship with the pupils."

The school have had significant building work under taken in the Well-Being centre which is a provision to support KS3 pupils who are struggling to engage with their current academic provision in a progressive manner. The centre has helped to improve pupil attendance and attainment, as well as having a direct and measurable impact on pupil well-being in the centre and across the school. Pupils at KS4 who require a more appropriate curriculum are placed at the EVE Project.

Year 11 students with ALN attend an employer's/careers fayre run by Careers Wales and a range of transitional visits to Coleg Gwent as part of their ALN transition programme. All Year 11 students have already completed their post 16 transitional meetings with careers Wales and Coleg Gwent and they have all received careers advice individually in transitional meetings arranged and facilitated by EFLC. ALN staff and students have also attended a range of extra-curricular trips/activities aimed at engaging ALN pupils in a positive and motivational manner as well as offering students the opportunity to make more inform decisions about their post 16 choices. The ALN department work closely with external agencies to identify ALN pupils at risk of becoming NEETS and engages services and projects that will help ensure these students engage in education, training or employment post 16.

The ALN department have also implemented a Person Centred Approach to supporting pupils; and all students on the ALN register now have OPPs (One Page Profiles) that are aimed at supporting pupils and helping staff to support those pupils in their mainstream lessons too. The ALNCO is part of a PCP Coaches working party that is striving towards excellence in person centred planning in preparation for the new ALN reform. Parents and multiagency staff have also been consulted about the PCP to ensure that all persons involved with the student are actively involved with their support plans in school. This child focussed approach is helping us to offer the best holistic support we possibly can to both pupils and their families.

A 'Concerns and Actions Panel' has also been set up by the ALNCO whereby referrals from the LOLs are sent to the ALNCO for discussion with a multiagency panel. This focusses the support a student receives and ensures that work is not duplicated by LOLs and other members of staff unnecessarily. The panel is attended by a representative from the EPS, Families First, Inspire Youth Workers, the school counsellor, the leader of learning whom made the referral, ALNCO, CAMHS, PMH, DAS and the education welfare officer. Each pupil is discussed and agreed actions take place immediately after the panel to ensure all students have quick access to the appropriate support mechanisms where necessary.

A new system for ensuring PSPs are updated and reviewed in a timely and professional manner has helped to bring clarity and structure to how pastoral support is delivered and recorded in EFLC. This systematic approach to pastoral support ensures that clear accessible records of pupil progress are accessible to all relevant staff and that information sharing is effective and suitable across the school. The ALNCO and CP manger have offered training in this to the LOLs and Pastoral team in order to ensure consistency of practice across the school.

The ALN department offer a range of interventions such as ELSA support, COMit, Anger Management, 5 Point Anxiety Scale Support, SEBD Support, Lego Therapy, EAL provision, SpLD (dyscalculia and dyslexia support), handwriting support, Study Skills for KS 4, Braille, GELS (general emotional literacy support), Numeracy and Literacy support, pastoral monitoring and 'talkabout' communications therapy support. All of these interventions run alongside general support in classrooms; we pride ourselves on remaining up to date and well trained in current best practice and this is reflected in our recent outcomes.

EAL support for our students improves year on year and we are now offering 3 support sessions per week to our EAL learners from a TA who is trained by the GEMMS service. EAL Students carryout guided reading three times a week they also have targeted support from a specialist GEMMS worker once a week too. We monitor this provision using the WAG scale for EAL students in line with the recommendations from our external GEMMs consultant at the school.

An 'intervention tracker' for ALN interventions and provisions has been put into place which uses measurable psychometric testing to track pupil progress in all interventions on a biannual basis. The outcomes of these assessments inform the target setting for all individual education plans in order to ensure that pupils are having appropriate support at the appropriate level at all times. Parents recive progress letters twice a year and can book an appointment to discuss these letters or their child's progress an any time.

The Learning Resource Base lead teacher Mrs Fieldhouse-Booth has worked incredibly hard to ensure EFLC has ASD awareness accreditation and that all staff are fully equipped to differentiate and plan their lessons in an ALN friendly manner. All staff at school have completed accredited ASD awareness training and ASD friendly training has been offered to all teachers and LSAs too. For the first time ever mainstream and LRB TAs are sharing responsibility across the school and all staff are working within the LRB and in mainstream in order to pave the way for more inclusive practice between the LRB and the mainstream.

The Additional Learning Needs Support team believes that all students have the right to access of the National Curriculum regardless of their ability. At Ebbw Fawr Learning Community (EFLC) we are determined to meet the educational needs of all our students in the secondary phase.

Some students will have a greater difficulty in accessing learning than the majority of children of their age. All students whether they have additional learning needs or not, must have equal opportunity to participate in the full curriculum of the school and all activities. Everyone in the school community – governors, staff, students and parents – have a positive and active part to play in achieving this aim:

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Some students will have a greater difficulty in accessing learning than the majority of children of their age. All students whether they have additional learning needs or not, must have equal opportunity to participate in the full curriculum of the school and all activities. Everyone in the school community – governors, staff, students and parents – have a positive and active part to play in achieving this aim:

- **Governors** – by fulfilling their statutory duties to students with special educational needs, by securing appropriate resources, by establishing a policy, which has a regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales.
- **Staff** – by acting on the principle that every member of staff is directly responsible for meeting the needs of all students, by working in partnership with the Additional Needs Coordinator (ANCO), pupil, parents and other agencies and by participating in appropriate training.
- **Students** – by having their views about their own needs regularly sought and carefully considered and all students treating their peers with respect.
- **Parents** – through consultation and by working in partnership with the school to help meet their child's needs.
- A child is considered to have additional learning needs if s/he has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made. A child has a learning difficulty if:
  - They have a greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of her/his age.
  - They have a disability that either prevents her/him from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided in LEA schools for children of their age
  - This policy is a whole school policy and applies to both the Primary and Secondary school and is based on the requirement of the Code of Practice for Wales.

### **What Additional Learning Needs encompasses:**

- Children of families in difficult circumstances
- Students with Special Educational Needs/Additional Learning Needs (SEN/ALN)\*
- Students with a disability or recognised clinical diagnosis of a medical need e.g. ADHD/ASD etc
- Certain students from minority ethnic groups including those learning English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Gypsies and Travellers
- Those who are looked-after by the local authority (CLA)
- Students with medical needs e.g. IBS, Mental Health needs
- Young offenders
- School refusers / phobics
- Students with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD/SEMH)

\*List of Additional Learning Needs available in glossary.

## **Additional Learning Needs Roles and Responsibilities**

Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (Secondary Phase): Ms G Astley  
Learning Resource Base Coordinator: Mrs R Fieldhouse-Booth  
Lead Teacher in the Wellbeing and Achievement Centre: Bethan Boulter  
Lead Teacher in EVE Project: Deb Cairns  
Child Protection Lead: Claire Jones  
ALN Governor: Gina Taylor

### **Role of the Additional Learning Needs Coordinator:**

- To oversee the school's Additional Learning Needs Policy
- To coordinate provision for students with additional learning needs (ALN)
- To supervise support staff involved in the support of students
- To maintain the school's special needs register
- To liaise with subject teachers on all students with additional learning needs – to share OPP One Page Profiles to ensure staff are aware of pupil needs
- The ALNCO has responsibility for writing IEPs in the Secondary school
- To work in partnership with the parents of children with additional learning needs
- To contribute to the training of staff and governors as required.
- To liaise and work in partnership with external agencies, including the EAS, Educational Psychology Service, Behaviour Support Service, Child Protection Service, Social Services, Speech and Language Team, Sensory Service and Health Service, as well as the medical and voluntary organisations.
- To liaise with the LEA when they conclude that a pupil at the school has special educational needs and to be responsible for ensuring that all the appropriate people know about that pupil's needs.
- To meet regularly with the Headteacher, Heads of Learning and Curriculum Team Leaders to discuss and review pupil need
- To attend ALNCO Secondary meetings organized by the LEA. To Liaise with all primary feeder schools on a regular basis to ensure transitional support and ALN practice is consistent and fairly implemented.

### **Learning Resource Base**

The school has an additional Learning Resource Base for pupils with a diagnosis of ASD. The base has a designation for 12 pupils, although at the moment it is oversubscribed with 20 pupils on roll. Admission to the base is via the Local Authority. There are currently 2 teachers and 5 support staff working in the base. Pupils wherever possible are given the opportunity to be included in mainstream groups and extra-curricular activities throughout the school across all year groups.

### **Role of the subject or class teacher**

- To identify students with learning needs and refer concerns to the ALNCO
- To plan what each pupil should learn and differentiate as necessary
- To assess and record whether progress is being made and set targets in light of this
- To use One Page Profiles to help inform the planning and preparation of lessons

### **Staffing**

#### **Secondary Phase:**

Currently the mainstream secondary school has 6 full-time and 1 part-time Learning Support Assistants (LSAs), who provide support for students with Statements of Special Educational Needs

and others at School Action Plus/School Action who have been allocated additional Support. 7 LSAs work in mainstream in the Secondary and 5 in the Learning Resource Base.

### **Primary Phase:**

Provision in the primary phase is overseen by Ms K Holley on a day-to-day basis.

### **Admission Arrangements for Students with Additional Learning Needs**

The currently agreed admissions policy of the Governors makes no distinction regarding students with special educational needs. Any specific access requirements are considered as and when they arise. In the case of pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Need, the AINCO will work closely with the LEA and other professionals in coming to a decision about the most appropriate provision for those students. There is an expectation that students with Statements will be included in mainstream education whenever possible.

Students with Additional Learning Needs but without Statements are treated in the same way as all other applicants for admission. The school also aims to provide for students not previously identified as having additional learning needs. No pupil can be refused admission on the grounds that s/he has additional learning needs if the school can meet those needs.

### **Allocation of Resources**

The Governors and Headteacher agree an Annual Budget for the school and this includes an allocation for Additional Learning Needs.

The ALNCO is responsible for how this money is spent, under the direction of the Headteacher.

### **Identification, Assessment, Monitoring and Review Arrangements with feeder Primary Schools**

The ALNCO will liaise on a regular basis with the Primary Coordinators regarding ALN/SEN provision. Close contact is maintained between the ALNCO and all Primary teachers and LSAs. Regular termly cluster meetings are held between the primary and secondary sectors and the Educational Psychology Service.

### **Identification, Assessment and Provision**

Students identified as having ALN/SEN are fully integrated into mainstream classes. Every effort is made to ensure that they have full access to the National Curriculum and are integrated into all aspects of the school.

All teachers in the whole school are responsible for identifying students with ALN/SEN. All teachers are responsible for the differentiation and planning in their classrooms to incorporate the needs of ALN learners.

In Primary, each class teacher is responsible for preparing an IEP which needs to be completed in the Autumn Term and Spring Term and is reviewed at the end of the Summer Term.

## Early Identification

Early identification of students with ALN/SEN is a priority. Evidence is provided by teacher observation, school tracking system and ALN assessment (please see School intervention plan appendix 1). Referrals from Health/Social Services may occur.

## One Page Profiles and IEPs

In Secondary, strategies for students' progress will be recorded in a One Page Profile and an IEP.

One Page Profiles are part of a new Person Centred Planning approach to supporting individuals with ALNs. The one page profile will identify:

- What people like and admire about me (the pupil)
- What is important to me
- How to support me well

Individual Education Plans identify specific targets to ensure students are making progress relevant to their individual needs. The IEP will address:

- short term targets – What will I do?
- Who will do this?
- When? How often?
- How will I know if this has been successful?
- How well did I do?

## IEP Targets must be **SMART**

Specific  
Measureable  
Attainable  
Relevant  
Time-bound

The IEP will record only that which is different from or in addition to the normal differentiated curriculum and will concentrate on individual targets that closely match the pupil's needs. Support given is based on teacher observation and assessment, observation and assessment from ANCO.

Support is also provided by various outside agencies, Speech and Language, assessments and reports from Educational Psychologists.

## Transition/Year 7

In the summer term prior to arrival at EFLC, the ALNCO has discussions with the Primary ANCOs and KS3 Coordinator regarding those students who are on School Action, School Action Plus or Statemented. The aim is to ensure continuity of provision on transfer, and collect as much relevant information as possible.

Consideration is given to:

- Academic ability
- Personality, to include friendship groups

In the Autumn term Year 7 students complete the NGRT Reading Assessment to ensure we can effectively track pupil literacy skills progress in a standardised manner.

## **The Code of Practice**

All those who teach a pupil with Additional Learning Needs will be informed of the pupil's needs by the ANCO. If there is essential medical information or a pupil requires treatment or management that is different from that normally given to other students, the ANCO will ensure that all who are likely to come into contact with the pupil are appropriately informed.

The SEN Code of Practice is based on two main principles:

- Provision for a child with special educational needs should match the nature of their needs
- There should be regular recording of a child's special educational needs, the action taken and the outcomes.

The Code of Practice lists the different ways in which adequate progress can be defined.

Identified students at Key Stage 4 in years 10 and 11 may be allowed to have an adapted timetable. This will be agreed on by the pupil, parents, subject teacher, Headteacher, and ANCO. Also students, who have a Statement of special Educational Needs, may be disapplied from certain subjects.

Differentiation takes place across all curriculum areas and staff receive training and support in this area. Study skills support is given in the Spring and Summer Term for SPLD students in Years 10 and 11.

There are different stages of support:

Initial support consists of differentiation in class

### **School Action**

- Support which is in addition to the usual school provision
- It is over and above the school's usual differentiated curriculum

### **School Action Plus**

- External agencies become involved – Social, Medical or Educational
- The involvement of an Educational Psychologist, social worker or a doctor moves a child to School Action Plus
- Parents are consulted following lack of progress or cause for concern

### **Statement of Special Educational Needs**

An assessment will be carried out by an Educational Psychologist. Reports by Occupational Therapists and medical advisers may also be relevant as well as advice from Careers Wales

- Parents and students are fully involved throughout the process
- A Statement may be amended as required
- Reviewed annually

### **Staff Training in Additional Learning Needs**

The ANCO is responsible for identifying the need for training in additional learning needs. INSET will be organised as appropriate and may involve external speakers.



The ANCO will assist in the provision of training for teaching and support staff.

### **Links with Agencies external to the school**

Multi-Agency work is a feature of Additional Learning Needs provision – including working with other schools, educational welfare, behaviour support and other agencies such as Careers Wales. When required, the school refers students to outside agencies. They are referred to the agency most appropriate to their needs.

Any issues concerning Child Protection are referred initially to the School's Child Protection Officer and then considered for further investigation if necessary as outlined in the School's Child Protection Policy. All cases which relate to welfare, attendance, or care issues are referred to the Educational Welfare Officer.

### **Role of Parents**

The Code of Practice for Wales acknowledges that working in partnership with parents plays a key role in promoting a culture of cooperation between parents, schools, LEAs and others. This is important in enabling children and young people with Additional Learning Needs to achieve their potential.

EFLC values working in partnership with parents. The views of parents will be sought at all stages of assessment and provision. All decisions will be recorded. All letters will have a section to be signed and returned by parents before a child is referred or assessed. We will endeavour to handle all matters relating to additional needs with care and sensitivity. We will ensure that parents are involved in all decisions about their child. We will make every effort to encourage parents to work in partnership with us for the benefit of their child – whether in Primary or Secondary. The school will keep records of all who are parents or have parental responsibility for each pupil. This is done by using SIMS information. When this involves adults in more than one household, we will deal directly with the parent/legal guardian, who has the day to day responsibility for the pupil

### **Triggers indicating the need for Intervention at School Action**

A pupil who, despite receiving differentiated learning opportunities:

- Makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are targeted at a pupil's identified area of weakness
- Shows signs of difficulty in developing literacy or mathematics skills that result in poor attainment in some curriculum areas
- Shows persistent emotional and/or behavioural difficulties which are not dealt with by the behaviour management techniques usually employed by the school
- Has sensory or physical problems and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of specialist equipment
- Has communication and/or interaction difficulties and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of a differentiated curriculum.

### **Triggers indicating the need for Intervention at School Action Plus**

- Despite having an individualised programme and/or concentrated support under School Action, the child or young person: continues to make little or no progress in specific areas over a long period of time
- Continues working at National Curriculum levels substantially below chronological age
- Continues to have difficulty in developing literacy and mathematics skills

- Has emotional or behavioural difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with the child's own learning or that of the class group, despite having an individualised behaviour management programme
- Have sensory or physical needs, and requires additional specialist equipment or regular advice or visits by a specialist service
- Has ongoing communication or interaction difficulties that impede the development of social relationships and cause substantial barriers to learning.

### **Indicators of Adequate Progress**

Progress can be defined in a number of ways:

- Closing the attainment gap between the child and his / her peers in line with expectation for their Chronological Age/ National Curriculum Levels
- Preventing the attainment gap from growing wider
- Improvement on the pupil's previous rate of progress
- Being able to access the full curriculum.
- Demonstrating an improvement in self-help, social or personal skills
- Demonstrating an improvement in behaviour.

### **ALN Link Staff for each department**

Each department in the school has an ALN link member of staff who liaises with the ALNCO to ensure all information regarding ALN pupils, protocols and procedures is relayed back to each team throughout the secondary phase. The link ALN staff are:

English – Sally Griffiths  
 Maths – Claire Jones  
 Science – Owen Griffiths  
 French – Dominic Pisacane  
 History – Dave Harrett  
 Music – Phillip Juleff  
 RE – Clare Lane  
 Art – Hannah O'Neil  
 Welsh – Menna Davies  
 DT – Liz Button  
 PE – Holly Padfield  
 IT – John Hillier  
 Geography – Chris Walters

Leaders of learning are responsible for referring concerns from staff to the ALNCO via the concerns and actions group. The concerns and action groups is a group of professionals who meet regularly to discuss any students who are of a concern to the school for any reason. The multiagency staff discuss the concerns presented by the LOL and make a decision as to what the best support/provision for that child might be. This is a graduated response to concerns raised by class teachers to the LOL and helps to ensure that pupils receive appropriate and proportionate support as decided by a team of professionals including an EP, the ALNCO, outreach workers, EWO, school counsellor etc. In addition to this process, any teacher can e-mail/speak to the ALNCO or ALN link staff at any time during the working week for advice and guidance regarding ALN matters.

## Glossary of terms

### **SEN code of practise**

The document published by the government in 2001, setting out the statutory duties of LEA'S, schools, early education settings and health and social services. It provides a framework for the identification and assessment of children with special needs. It also provides guidelines for making effective provision for these children. Parents can ask to see a copy of the code of practise in school. The SEN code of practise should not be confused with the Disability Discrimination Act Code of Practise for schools.

### **SEN Register stages**

|     |  |  |
|-----|--|--|
| SA  | School Action                          | The stage where the SENCO and class teacher make provision for a child that is additional to or different from what is normally provided within a differentiated setting. The child will have been identified as having AEN, and may have an IEP.  |
| SA+ | School Action Plus                     | The stage when specialist advice and support for a child has been given by one or more outside professionals to the SENCO and teacher, so that more specialised provision can be made that is in addition to, or different from what is normally provided within a differentiated setting. The child identified will have been identified as having AEN and will have an IEP reflecting the specialist advice. |
| S   | Statement of special educational needs | The document issued by the LEA which contains details of the child's educational needs, as identified by the LEA during the statutory assessment. The statement includes details of the provision required to meet those needs. It will name the school that the child will attend, agreed with the parents, school and LEA. Pupils will always have an IEP.   |

## A-Z Learning difficulties and disabilities

These are some of the most common learning difficulties that feature on the SEN register. Further information about some of the most common difficulties can be found on the following pages.

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>ADD</b>  | Attention deficit disorder                      |
| <b>ADHD</b> | Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder        |
| <b>ASD</b>  | Autistic spectrum disorder + Aspergers syndrome |
| <b>BESD</b> | Behavioural, emotional and social difficulty    |
| <b>DCD</b>  | Developmental coordination disorder             |
| <b>EAL</b>  | English as an Additional Language               |
| <b>GLD</b>  | Global learning difficulties                    |
| <b>HI</b>   | Hearing impairment                              |
| <b>MLD</b>  | Moderate learning difficulties                  |
| <b>ODD</b>  | Oppositional defiant disorder                   |
| <b>PMLD</b> | Profound and multiple learning disorders        |
| <b>SLCD</b> | Speech, language and communication              |
| <b>SPLD</b> | Specific learning difficulty/dyslexia           |
| <b>VI</b>   | Visual impairment                               |

## Reading ages

Any pupil with a reading age below 9.5 is classed as having ALN. These pupils will not be included exclusively on the SEN register. A list of the pupils in each year group with a reading age below 9.5 will be included at the end of the SEN register for that year group. These pupils will need to be kept in mind as they may have difficulties accessing work.

## One Page Profiles and IEP'S

The plan devised for meeting a learner's special educational needs. It sets out what support will be given, who will provide it and what resources will be required. It will set out targets for the learner. IEP'S will be reviewed by the school. Parents and pupils are invited to discuss and review the plan to help decide on new targets.

## ADD/ADHD – Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder

The terms ADD and ADHD are medical diagnoses and describe a syndrome of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, which may include extreme impulsiveness, inattentiveness and continuous motor activity. These are complex conditions. Children with ADD or ADHD may sometimes be on medication. More boys than girls seem to be affected.

### Key characteristics

A child with ADD or ADHD may:

- Display impulsivity in all areas of school life
- Murmur, talk or call out continuously because they are unable to internalise speech
- Frequently stand up or walk around
- Lash out physically or verbally with no thought for the consequences
- Be easily distracted
- Find it hard to concentrate on one activity
- Avoid tasks that require sustained attention
- Have problems with motor co-ordination
- Have poor social interactions and difficulty making friends
- Find it hard to follow instructions
- Make mistakes because of an inability to attend to detail
- Have poor organisational skills
- Have perceptual-motor problems and find writing difficult
- Have limited concentration and listening skills
- Be unaware of danger
- Have constantly fidgety hands and feet
- Be unable to communicate ideas easily

### Support strategies

You may need to:

- Be consistent in using an organised set of rules and routines making the pupil aware of any changes in a routine well in advance
- Provide opportunities to move around the classroom
- **Explain to others that it is the behaviour that is a problem, not the child as a person**
- Use time out as a benefit not a sanction
- Help pupils organise written work
- Give short simple instructions
- Let the pupil work in an individual or paired situation rather than expecting them to work in a group
- Set short clearly defined targets

## Autism and ASD- Autistic spectrum disorder

This condition affects a child's ability to socialise and to develop speech and language. The main characteristics are now commonly described as a triad of impairments. These impairments affect: **Communication** – language impairment, which may include speech, intonation, gesture, body language and/or facial expressions

**Social interaction** – difficulties such as lack of empathy and perception, inappropriate eye-contact, poor grasp of timing or rejection of physical contact

**Imaginative thought** – inflexible or over-literal thought processes, which may include obsessional behaviours or repetitive movements and a resistance to change.

This condition requires a multi-disciplinary diagnosis. Children with autism will have a different view of the world and what is important

### Key characteristics

A child with autistic spectrum disorder **may**:

- Find it hard or impossible to look others in the eye
- Prefer to be solitary and have great difficulty dealing with other children invading their personal space
- Flap arms or hands, particularly when upset or frustrated
- Have delayed speech
- Have difficulty understanding jokes, idioms or figures of speech – everything is taken literally, making it difficult for them to make friends, understand some oral instructions and follow parts of literacy lessons
- Have difficulties with language, such as parroting what others say
- Fly into a rage for no apparent reason, although this usually turns out to be because someone has moved something or changed routine
- Display repetitive behaviour, such as turning lights on and off, opening and closing doors, or watching the same videos over and over

### Support strategies

You may need to:

- Provide an area in the classroom where the pupil can have their own personal space
- Ensure that the classroom has an element of continuity – not too many changes at one time
- Prepare the pupil well in advance of any changes in a school/classroom routine, as this can be very distressing for them
- Keep instructions clear and simple
- **Say the pupils name first when asking a question – “Jack, what is the capital of France”, not “ What is the capital of France, Jack”**
- Explain jokes, figures of speech and idioms
- Ensure that the pupil understands that school and classroom rules apply to them
- Use visual prompts
- Allow extra time to complete a task
- Offer different ways of recording information
- Explain actions/wrong doings to the pupil rather than shouting at them as they will not be able to process information as quickly as their peers

## **BESD – behavioural, emotional and social difficulty**

This term is used when a pupil's ongoing behavioural difficulties appear to have their root cause in emotional or possibly social problems. It is important to remember that some children have deep rooted emotional difficulties that these may manifest themselves in unusual quietness, rather than disruptive behaviour.

Some emotional problems may be temporary and can be dealt with using standard pastoral strategies. Others are so complex that outside agencies need to be involved.

### **Key characteristics**

A child emotional and behavioural difficulties with may:

- Find it difficult to form friendships
- Often appear preoccupied
- Have difficulty keeping on task
- Have psychosomatic illness
- Have low self esteem
- Become bullies themselves
- Be aggressive and disruptive
- Find it difficult to conform to classroom rules and routines
- Be excessively attention seeking
- Underachieve in many areas of the school curriculum

### **Support strategies**

You may need to:

- Ensure a consistent approach to the child's behavioural difficulties
- Develop social interaction
- Give short clearly defined tasks
- Encourage the use of ICT to increase motivation
- Have the use of a Pastoral support plan
- Seek external advice and help

## **Dyslexia and SpLD – specific learning difficulty**

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty that affects the ability to read and spell. About 60% of children with dyslexia also have trouble with the sounds that make up the words.

Dyslexia can also cause difficulties with basic maths, general literacy skills, word interpretation and perception, organisational skills, short-term memory, sequencing and information processing.

However children with Dyslexia are often very creative and able in certain areas of the curriculum, such as art, design, technology, computing and lateral thinking.

Dyslexia is a complex neurological disorder that affects about 10% of the population, across all levels of intellectual ability. It tends to affect more boys than girls and often runs in families. It is believed to have a genetic cause.

### **Key characteristics**

A dyslexic pupil may:

- Use bizarre spellings and have poor phonological awareness
- Frequently lose the place when reading and see blurred or distorted word shapes
- Confuse some high frequency words such as saw/was
- Reverse numbers and digits beyond the age where this is normal
- Write words with the correct letters in the wrong order
- Write sequences of letters and numbers in reverse
- Be unable to remember simple sequences such as days of the week
- Be unorganised
- Experience problems following oral instructions
- Have poor sense of time and direction
- Make frequent errors when copying, especially from the board
- Have low levels of co-ordination and self esteem
- Display bad behaviour as avoidance tactics when the work is too hard

### **Support strategies**

You may need to:

- Use multi-sensory methods to support learning
- Ensure repetition of learning, using word and language games
- Make use of coloured overlays and line trackers where necessary
- Create a positive reading environment
- Use ICT as a way of recording work
- Encourage other methods of recording such as, diagrams, labelled pictures/drawings, flowcharts or comic strip stories
- Make use of audio visual aids
- Keep oral instructions brief and clear



## **EAL – English as an Additional Language**

EAL learners are a very diverse group. The government definition of an EAL learner includes anyone who has been exposed to a language other than English during early childhood 'and continues to be exposed to this language in the home or in the community'.

This includes, for example:

- new arrivals from abroad who speak little or no English
- children or young people from other countries who are in the UK for a limited time, for example if they have a parent who is studying here, who have been educated in an English-medium school abroad and are fluent in several languages
- young people who were born in the UK and speak English most of the time at home and school, but who also speak another language occasionally to extended family members.

### **Key characteristics**

An EAL pupil may:

- have varied cultural, social and economic backgrounds;
- have varying levels and kinds of school experience;
- have different expectations of schooling and education;
- have had disrupted or little formal education;
- have had varying previous exposure to English;
- be born in the UK, arrive before formal schooling begins or arrive later;
- come from established or new communities;
- be isolated, refugees or be with other members of the same language/cultural/ethnic group;
- experience or have experienced racism, emotional or psychological stress, mental or physical ill health.

### **Support strategies**

You may need to:

- Make the verbal curriculum more visual
- Make the abstract curriculum more concrete e.g. use graphic organisers
- Develop interactive and collaborative teaching and learning styles e.g. group work and collaborative activities
- Think about the language demands of the curriculum (oral and written) and provide models
- Use drama and role play
- Provide opportunities for exploratory talk e.g. group tasks and practical activities
- Ensure home languages are valued and used e.g. use some words from learners first language
- Provide opportunities to talk before writing e.g. language drills / explaining key terms
- Support through key phrases and structures rather than key words e.g. scaffolding

## **MLD – moderate learning difficulties**

Pupils with MLD also known as global learning difficulties, have a general developmental delay. They have difficulties with learning across all areas of the school curriculum. Many of these learners have a delay of about three years and consequently need a high level of support within the mainstream school.

Many pupils with MLD will also be suffering from low levels of self esteem and motivation. They may become resentful and refuse to attempt new work. It is likely that they will rely on teaching assistants to help them with tasks and they will need much encouragement and praise to persuade them to attempt new challenges which are within their capability and develop greater independence.

### **Key characteristics**

A child with MLD may:

- Have immature listening/attention skills
- Have immature social skills
- Have poor auditory memory
- Have poor visual memory
- Rely on teaching assistants for guidance with work
- Have difficulty acquiring basic skills
- Need a high level of support with investigation and problem solving skills
- Have difficulties applying what they know to other situations
- Have poor verbal and non-verbal reasoning skills

### **Support strategies**

You may need to:

- Provide teaching assistant support at the beginning and end of a lesson, but encourage learners to work independently where possible
- Ensure learning activities are broken down into small steps
- Use visual and concrete materials to aid understanding
- Keep language simple and familiar
- Keep instructions short and concise
- Provide alternative methods of recording
- Allow extra time to complete a task
- Help learners organise their writing by providing writing frames

## **SCLD – speech, communication and language difficulties**

Speech and language impairment can vary a great deal from mild difficulties to severe problems with the understanding and use of language. Specific language impairment is diagnosed when a child has a difficulty with language but is developing normally in all other areas.

### **Key characteristics**

A child with a specific language impairment may have difficulties with one or more of the following areas:

- Phonology – processing speech sounds
- Grammar- organising words into sentences, using the correct grammatical structure
- Word finding – some learners have difficulty recalling the correct word when they need to use it.
- Semantics – the meanings of words and how they relate to each other. If they cannot retain the meaning of new vocabulary, then they will have difficulty understanding concepts and ideas
- Attention and listening – either they cannot screen out what is unimportant from what they hear and so listen to everything, or they lack skill at controlling attention so miss large chunks of information
- Pragmatics- (the way language is used to convey thoughts and feelings) – some children have difficulty in understanding how to use language in different social situations and can make very inappropriate remarks

### **Support strategies**

You may need to:

- Use pictures, signs and symbols
- Use visual or concrete materials to support the understanding of new conceptual vocabulary
- Break instructions up into chunks
- Give opportunities for revision of key concepts and vocabulary
- Use games to develop listening skills
- Use writing frames

## **Visual Impairment**

Visual impairment or low vision is a severe reduction in vision that cannot be corrected with standard glasses or contact lenses and reduces a person's ability to function at certain or all tasks. It is not always easy to recognize that a child might be visually impaired. Although even very young children can show some physical signs of having trouble with vision, many times problems with a child's eyesight are not detected until after he goes to school. The American Optometric Association points out that because 80 percent of a child's learning relies on his vision acuity, early detection and treatment are needed.

### **Key characteristics**

Visual impairment is essentially an umbrella term used to describe the loss of sight that can be a consequence of a number of different medical conditions. Some common causes of visual impairment are glaucoma, retinopathy of prematurity, cataracts, retinal detachment, macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, cortical visual impairment, infection and trauma. These are just a handful of dozens of conditions impacting sight, and each condition has its own unique characteristics and clinical features. In addition, the impact of the visual impairment on individual learning is also tied to the onset, the severity, and the type of visual loss, as well as to any coexisting disabilities that may be present in the child. For this reason, all classroom accommodations, modifications, and strategies must be designed with the individual needs of each student with a visual impairment in mind. There is no one-size-fits-all model.

In addition to decreased visual acuity and visual field, a number of other vision problems may also impact the visual functioning of the student with visual impairment. There may be issues with sensitivity to light or glare, blind spots in their visual fields, or problems with contrast or certain colors. Factors such as lighting, the environment, fatigue, and emotional status can also impact visual functioning in many of these students throughout the day. Students who have the same visual condition may use their sight quite differently. To ensure accessibility to classroom instruction, it is essential that you know how your student is using his/her vision.

### **Support strategies**

Classroom accommodations will be quite varied and should be individualized according to the specific needs of the student. However, there are some basic best practices that can guide the development of the most effective adaptations.

- The classroom teacher should encourage independence as often as possible to avoid the trap of "learned helplessness."
- Encourage the student to move independently through the classroom, and organize your classroom accordingly. Materials, desks, and other objects in the classroom should be maintained in consistent locations. Ensuring that cabinets are fully closed, chairs pushed in, and doors are not left half ajar will help with safety in navigating the classroom.
- Design your instruction so that the student has the most opportunity to act independently. The student's orientation and mobility specialist and teacher of students with visual impairments can assist with room arrangements and room familiarization.
- for the student with low vision, make sure that he is near the front of the room where he can see the blackboard.

- Control lighting variables when presenting learning materials to those students who are sensitive to light and glare.
- Use verbal cues with those students who cannot see body movements or physical cues.
- One key accommodation that is absolutely essential is access to textbooks and instructional materials in the appropriate media and at the same time as their sighted peers. For students who are blind this may mean braille and/or recorded media. For the student with low vision, this may mean large print text or the use of optical devices to access text and/or recorded media while in class. Working closely with a student's teacher of students with visual impairments in advance helps ensure accessible materials and availability of these materials in a timely manner.