

Introduction to these resources for student teachers

These materials are to help student teachers understand what Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) means, and how they can help effectively include children with such needs in the classroom. They provide:

1. Information about Speech, Language and Communication Needs
2. Advice on how to identify and include children with these needs in the classroom
3. A series of case study exercises to help student teachers reflect on the issues involved.

The materials consist of:

Info sheets:

1. How children develop speech, language and communication skills
2. What are Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)?
3. Creating an inclusive classroom

Case studies:

1. Case study – Noah, Key Stage 1 English
2. Case study – Germain, Key Stage 2 English
3. Case Study – Stephen, Secondary English
4. Case Study – Stephen, Secondary Maths
5. Case Study – Stephen, Secondary Science

Each Case Study has a) an audio of the parent talking about the pupil's needs, b) contextual information with details about the lesson plan, c) a learning plan which sets out the learning targets for the pupil as developed with them, d) some tasks to help you engage with the case study.

The best way to use the materials is to read the three info sheets then choose the most applicable case study to work through. This will allow you to contextualize the information in relation to real classroom issues. The case study materials will ask you to refer back to the previous resources and other Communication Trust and Department for Education resources as you complete the tasks.

It is important that you think about these materials from the perspective of inclusion. There are many definitions of this term but a core principle is adopting an attitude and mindset which recognises that diversity and difference in the classroom is a strength and that teachers can and should plan and carry out their lessons so that they think about and meet the needs of all children, not just those with a label

of special educational needs (Florian and Black-Hawkins 2011). At the same time, being able to recognise and understand some of those difficulties and needs will help you meet them.

In any Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programme, whether it is a university led programme such as a PGCE or an employment based route such as School Direct, you will be introduced to core ideas and principles around inclusion. These materials should be used alongside your programme to help you learn more about the specific needs of children with SLCN. As with all of your learning in your ITE year, it is a starting point, and one of the key features of an inclusive teacher is that they continually reflect on and seek to improve their practice. This is often done by continuing to learn about what the evidence shows us about effective teaching and filtering that through their growing experience of working with children in the classroom (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education 2012).

You may find it useful to look at the case study materials at the start of your programme, and then when you have had some more “real life” experience in the classroom, to come back to them and think about how your understanding and perspectives have changed. It may also be helpful to use them as a springboard to ask questions of your school based mentor or class teacher, or your supervising university tutor for your school placement.

In using the materials, and particularly when thinking about what you can learn from the case studies that will inform your own practice as a beginning teacher, you should bear in mind the guidance of the SEND Code of Practice and the graduated approach. The graduated approach means that schools and teachers continually assess children's progress and identify any barriers to learning. The classteacher and/or subject teacher is at the heart of this process and holds the key responsibility, in both primary and secondary schools, for ensuring individual assessments lead to a developing understanding of any difficulties or needs in learning. Teachers should follow the Review-Plan-Assess-Do cycle in thinking about the needs of all the pupils in



their class. Where a teacher identifies a possible need or barrier to learning, they will be expected to work with other professionals including the SENCO or Inclusion Manager to further review and identify strategies for support. In some cases, this will involve getting additional help from outside agencies such as the Educational Psychology or Speech and Language Therapy Service. However, even where others are involved, the class and/or subject teacher remains the key person responsible for the progress and development of the pupil.

These materials will help you to be more effective in following the Review-Plan-Assess-Do cycle and ensuring the effective inclusion of children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs.

You can read more about the graduated approach at www.nasen.org.uk

www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk

The Communication Trust is a coalition of over 50 not-for-profit organisations. Working together we support everyone who works with children and young people in England to support their speech, language and communication.