


 LETS Go!

Differentiating the curriculum for children with Down syndrome

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Planning Provision

1. High Quality Teaching - High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have SEN.
2. Targeted Provision - Teacher and SENCO should agree in consultation with the parent and the pupil the adjustments, interventions and support to be put in place, as well as the expected impact on progress, development or behaviour, along with a clear date for review

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Four key elements of good to outstanding practice:

- A whole setting ethos that respects individuals' differences, maintains high expectations for all and promotes good communication between teachers, parents and pupil
- Knowledgeable and sensitive staff who understand the processes of learning and the impact that SEND can have on these
- Creative adaptations to classroom practice enabling children with special needs to learn inclusively and meaningfully, alongside their peers
- Access to additional learning programmes and resources to support the development of key skills and strategies for independent learning when assessment and QFT indicates that the pupil is not making progress

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Differentiation includes

- Modification of curriculum objectives and learning outcomes
- Adaptation to activities, resources and forms of assessment
- Taking into account
 - Individual abilities and needs
 - Areas of strength and difficulty
 - Learning styles
 - Current skills level/developmental stage

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Differentiation

- Need to know:
 - General learning profile – Down syndrome specific training, knowledge and information
 - Specific areas of strength and difficulty for the individual – Getting to know the child, statement and reports, parents, previous staff, external professionals, individual learning log
 - Activities and resources that engage the child
- A pupil profile/A student passport

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Speech and language difficulties

- Reducing and/or supporting the speech and language elements
- Taking into account language delay – understanding of necessary vocabulary e.g. comparatives, time,
- Teaching new vocabulary and language as part of the objectives
- Incorporating SLT targets

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Verbal short term memory difficulties

- Reducing VSTM demands and supporting memory skills
 - Use of sign and gesture
 - Visual supports – pictures, objects, extra copies
 - Visual timetables and lists
 - Written instructions
 - Breaking up activities and instructions
 - Improving memory skills

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Motor delay

- Reducing motor demands
 - Handwriting; reducing amount of output word cards computer
 - Sitting; limiting the amount of sitting supportive equipment OT/Physio
 - P.E./playtime; adaptations to the rules and equipment

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Social strengths

- Use of peers as role models
 - Examples of work
 - Teaching through modelling
 - Behaviour
- Motivating
- Working as a pair/part of a small group
- Need a social curriculum as well as an academic curriculum to fulfil all learning needs

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Attention, concentration, behaviour

- More frequent change
- Breaking activities into several short tasks
- Building in 'reward' time
- Use of now-then board/visual timetable/tick list of jobs
- Individual motivator/behaviour management system

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Key areas for differentiation

- Methods of assessment and responding
 - Whole school/class measures
 - P levels, curriculum levels
 - EHCP
 - IEP targets
 - Targets and assessment from partnership services
 - Personal learning log – examples of work, amount and type of support, photos, videos
 - (Expectations)

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Roles and Responsibilities

- Class /Subject Teacher
 - The class or subject teacher should remain responsible for working with the child on a daily basis.
 - Where the interventions involve group or one-to-one teaching away from the main class or subject teacher, they should still retain responsibility for the pupil.
- SENCO
 - should support the class or subject teacher in the further assessment of the child's particular strengths and weaknesses, in problem solving and advising on the effective implementation of the support.

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Choosing appropriate targets

- Decide on the child's learning objective based on the class objective
- ?Need to review prior learning or language
- Include individual targets e.g. IEP targets, SLT, OT/Physio, personal skills, topic targets etc
- How will learning and achievement be monitored and recorded
- Need for adaptation/additional resources

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Differentiating an activity

- Input
 - Supporting listening
 - Balance and aim of 'listening' times
 - Key input required based on child's objective
 - Visual supports
 - Use of gesture and sign
 - Use of a whiteboard/note taking
 - Extra copy of whole class/teacher materials
 - Cueing to important information

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Differentiating an activity

- Task
 - Individual objective may be needed
 - Incorporate individual targets e.g. IEP
 - Supports for areas of difficulty; handwriting, spelling, recall
 - Pace and length of activity
 - Adapting worksheets

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Differentiating an activity

- Review
 - Input supports
 - Something visual to share
 - Preparing in advance e.g. priming a question
 - Keeping a record – was the objective achieved, level and type of support

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Developing independence

- Important for
 - Developing sense of achievement and success
 - Developing skills and strengths
 - Being important and valued
 - Being seen as equal
- Developing Independence
 - Being given jobs and responsibilities
 - Being given choices

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Developing independence

- During the school years, children with Down syndrome steadily improve their self-help skills.
- Developing and refining skills – fine and gross motor skills, eating behaviours, toileting, writing, personal care etc.
- Does need focus and targets – included in the learning objective, IEP, annual review.

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Individualised learning

Too much individualised teaching in a 1:1 setting can:

- reduce exposure to age appropriate models of behaviour/language and opportunities for pupil to pupil interaction
- lead to social exclusion, feeling different
- make it difficult for staff - teacher and/or assistant roles
- may be too demanding for pupil and assistant
- may lead to some unwanted behaviour!

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Using support staff effectively

- A key role of the adult is to facilitate social inclusion
 - Needs observation – lunch times, play times, in the classroom
 - Need to ensure fully included
 - Other children will be influenced by adults attitudes and behaviour
 - May need to educate other children
- May need some whole class/school input

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Observation

Day	Lesson/activity	Time started	Time finished	Comment/observation

- What went well?
- What was a challenge?
- What opportunities were missed?
- What might be helpful next time?

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Using support staff effectively

- Adults can be a barrier to social inclusion
 - Not providing too much support from the beginning
 - Providing the wrong type of support
 - Responding for the child
- Other children are the biggest resource
- Need to involve other children to increase participation

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Not providing too much support

- What is the expectation of the others in the class?
 - Following the class 'rules'
 - Sitting on the carpet, lining up, moving around school, lunchtimes etc.
 - Managing and organising themselves
 - Responsible for their own things
- Working independently on a task
- Be aware of developing reliance on adults

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Providing the wrong type of support

- Following the child's lead
 - Ensuring the child's own work
 - Appropriate differentiation
- Working alongside the child
- Accepting the child's level – work may not be 100% correct!
- Be aware of limiting the child's full inclusion

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Responding for the child

- May need some structured teaching
- Need for communication supports
 - Use of signs, pictures, objects and word boards
 - Use of sentence/phrase strips
- Encouraging communication with peers – talking partner(s)
- Plan for questions/responses
- Sharing work/ideas with the teacher
- Communication diary

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Conversation supports



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Strategies for supporting independence

Within the classroom;

- Cue to important listening times
- Having responsibilities
- Helping other children
- Encourage watching other children
- List of jobs - memory support (pictures)
- Timetable
- Social story
- Written instructions

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Visual reminders



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Strategies for supporting independence

- Independent working
 - A goal for every session/activity (from reception)
 - Building up from a few minutes
 - A simple task the child can complete
 - More examples
 - A related task
 - A set of individual tasks
 - May need prompting – visual and motivating

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Inclusion within the classroom

- 90% in the classroom
- Social inclusion – workstations, 1:1 placement
- Independent working
- Working with a partner/as part of a small group
- Differentiation requires:
 - Creative thinking and imagination
 - Common sense, flexibility and additional resources

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Reference

- Bird, Alton & Mackinnon (2000) Accessing the curriculum – strategies for differentiation for pupils with Down syndrome <http://www.down-syndrome.org/information/education/curriculum>
- DSA Education Support Pack for Schools <http://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/shop/publications/education/primary/1101-education-support-pack-for-schools-primary-schools.html>
- nasen – www.nasen.org.uk

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