



## CASE STUDY REPORT

# Inclusion Development Programme: Using the Autism Spectrum training materials in a Primary School

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*This study was originally published in 2010 as part of the 'What Works Well' initiative, part of the National Strategies for Education in England.*

## Abstract

**Background:** The purpose of the study was to improve the understanding and practice of teachers and support staff when working with youngsters on the autistic spectrum, in order to improve learning, behaviour, and social skills.

**Aims:** The main aim of the development work was to improve the understanding and practice of teachers and support staff when working with youngsters on the autistic spectrum, to enable them to be better integrated, happier and make maximum progress.

**Methods:** The participants included teachers, teaching assistants, headteachers, LA advisers, SLT members, and SIPs. They all worked together to improve understanding and practice of teachers and support staff when working with youngsters on the autistic spectrum. Staff were released to do modules, worked in pairs to discuss ideas, and used self-evaluation checklists, observation outcomes, and pupil consultation data to measure progress.

**Findings:** The main findings are that the IDP training has had a positive impact on pupil learning, teaching, and school organization and leadership. It has improved learning and behavior, increased social skills, and increased knowledge and understanding of autism.

**Implications:** The findings suggest that CPD approaches such as releasing teachers to do modules, working in pairs, and providing resources and activities have had a positive impact on pupil learning, teaching, and school organization and leadership.

*This abstract was generated by Camtree using a large language model (LLM) and added to the original report in 2023.*

**Keywords:** Primary education; Inclusion

## Introduction

### What were your reasons for doing this type of development work?

To improve the understanding and practice of teachers and support staff when working with youngsters on the autistic spectrum.

### Who might find this case study useful?

- Headteacher
- LA adviser
- Senior leadership team (SLT)
- SIP (School Improvement Partner)
- Teacher
- Teaching assistant

## Description

### What specific curriculum area, subject or aspect did you intend to have impact on?

- All aspects
- All subjects
- Inclusion

### How did you intend to impact on pupil learning?

We wanted the needs of children on the spectrum to be better understood and catered for, allowing them to be better integrated, happier and make maximum progress.

### What were your success criteria?

- The knowledge and understanding of all staff to improve over the course of the training
- Actions taken by staff to have a positive impact on learning, behaviour and social skills
- Focus children to be more settled and make progress

### What information or data did you use to measure progress towards your success criteria?

- Logs or interviews
- Observation outcomes
- Periodic teacher assessment
- Pupil consultation data
- Pupils' work
- Test results

## Describe the CPD approaches you used

Teachers were released to do modules. Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) had time during LSA meetings and INSET days. Staff did the training in twos so they could discuss the ideas and their implementation from week to week as they worked. Each pair contained 2 members of staff from across one key stage, which helped build positive working relationships. One teacher was a member of the leadership team which helped inform the SLT of the IDP and its benefits.

One module was supposed to be done at a time. Notes were made as appropriate on a sheet provided. A 'how to log on' sheet was also provided so people could log on independently at home and school. It is worth keeping a log

of where each person gets to each session as not everyone gets through a module per session and some people forget where they are! It is also worth checking it is online every time you want to use it with staff, as sometimes it mysteriously crashes.

#### Evaluating the CPD

- We used the self evaluation checklist before and after the training.
- Teachers had a focus child they used the ideas for and they made notes at the end of the training about actions (teaching/resources/activities) and their impact (learning/behaviour/social skills).
- The SENCo also did an observation and interview with one child before and after the training to observe the impact.
- We looked at academic progress over the year via QCA and NC Test data.

#### Who provided you with support?

- Local authority staff
- Senior management

#### How were you supported?

The lead inspector on the IDP spoke to the leadership team about its potential value.

I was also a member of a support group locally, led by the inspector, where good practice ideas were shared.

#### Impact

##### What has been the overall impact on pupil learning?

**Learning** Children's learning and rate of progress have improved. Children are clearer about the teachers' expectations and what they are learning. They are more able to access activities other children are doing. There is increased interest in writing activities. They are remembering more.

**Behaviour** Levels of concentration and independence have improved. They are more focused and confident. They are more calm and patient. There are less unexpected changes to behaviour.

**Social Skills** Children are better at working alongside others and interacting. They are happier! Children now ask if they don't understand or need help. One child has stopped hitting other children. Another child is more talkative.

##### Quotes you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

**Learning** 'She is in a better frame of mind to concentrate on her learning.' (Year 5 Teacher) 'I sometimes ask for help and I sometimes don't ... I sometimes sort it out myself' (Year 5 pupil)

**Behaviour** 'There is less drama at the beginning of a lesson - clear instructions help defuse reactions' (Year 3 Teacher) 'I have a special book I write in to show Miss L. Sometimes I don't want to tell her because it's hard, so I write it down.' (Year 5 pupil)

**Social skills** 'Involving the whole class in discussions has increased their support for him and given him a greater feeling of security within the classroom.' (Year R Teacher) 'I like me, I like making new friends and my feelings are happy.' (Year 5 pupil)

## Quantitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Periodic teacher assessment
- Test results

## Qualitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Logs or interviews
- Observation outcomes
- Pupils' work

## Describe the evidence of impact on pupil learning

National Curriculum data for the year showed that the focus children made an average of 2 sublevels progress over the year per subject. One child made such good progress, an average of 2.67 sublevels per subject, that she came off an IEP in March.

An observation of a child before and after the IDP training, showed a 50% reduction in time taken to settle to task and a 58% reduction in fiddling!

A questionnaire completed with the same child showed an increase from 6 green and 6 amber responses to 11 green and 1 amber response. She had particularly developed her self help strategies and her self confidence in using these to overcome difficulties. She was also much more positive about working and playing with others and the number of friends she has. Finally she was more aware of her targets and positive about her academic ability.

Discussions with staff (pupil progress meetings) revealed improvements in confidence and independence as well as academic effort and ability.

## What has been the impact on teaching?

**Teaching Approaches** Teachers have made plans and timetables clearer and more visible. Their explanations and expectations have become more straightforward and easier to understand. Choices of tasks are used. Lots of prior warnings are given before tasks change. An adult often works with a child to get them started on an activity. Children's sitting positions have been adapted and set. Staff think about who is in the group and next to the child. They have given time to talk with the children. One LSA says she explains a task then leaves and lets the child come to her if he needs to - this gives more processing time to the child.

**Resources** Resources such as fidget balls, wobble cushions and visual timetables have been used. Timers are deployed to aid focus and task completion. Visual timetables and plans have worked well for lesson and lunch times.

**Activities** Activities have been set up to encourage new social groups and games. Sometimes a 'circle of friends' approach is used or social stories. Emotional Literacy Support has been initiated with one child, focusing on friendship skills within a group. O.T./gross motor skill activities have been introduced for another child. More multisensory learning has been utilised generally. Time out has been introduced as an option one boy can take if he feels the need - he is using it less and less but likes to know it is available.

## Quotes you think are relevant to the impact on teaching

Teaching 'I have become more patient and less confrontational so situations have not accelerated.' (Year 4 LSA) 'She now sits next to the computer screen during inputs and this has upped her level of concentration.' (Year 5 Teacher)

Resources 'He now has a specific adult he knows he can talk to or ask about issues.' (Year 2 Teacher and member of Senior Leadership Team) 'A quiet area with books and happy/sad faces has been created for one child-it works very well.' (Year R LSA)

Activities 'I ensure the autistic child is next to me and becomes my helper. I also make sure he has his own worksheet so he doesn't have to share.' (Year 3 LSA) 'He likes joining in with the music and ribbon activities and we keep his special ribbons for him every day.' (Lunchtime Supervisory Assistant)

### Evidence of impact on teaching

- Evidence from observation and monitoring
- Teacher perceptions

### Describe the evidence of impact on teaching

On the self evaluation checklist teachers' average total increased from 80/128 to 105/128 (63%-82%).

LSAs' average total increased from 66/128 to 95/128 (52%-74%).

The SENCo's data went from 88/128 to 115/128 (69%-90%)

### What has been the impact on school organisation and leadership?

It has been great for the SENCo to work with different groups across the school - LSAs/HLTAs and teachers.

It has also been beneficial for different staff to pair up with people they rarely work alongside.

It has been useful for one of the teachers to be a member of the leadership team so they can understand the IDP and its qualities.

The SENCo has also benefited from working as part of a project group with SENCos from other schools and an inspector.

### Evidence of impact on school organisation and leadership

- By the middle of the year other teachers were asking if they could do the IDP in preparation for teaching certain youngsters next year!
- 4 teachers completed all the modules. So did the SENCo.
- 14 LSAs and 3 HLTAs are in the middle of accessing the modules. They will have completed 1-6 by the end of the academic year.
- All have increased their knowledge and understanding of autism and made changes to their practice as a result of the training.
- 2 teachers are now trialling new Maths materials together - they had never worked together at all before being paired up to do the IDP.

### Summary

#### What key resources would people who want to learn from your experience need access to?

IDP website or DVD. How to log on information. Paper and pencil.

#### What CPD session and resources were particularly useful?

- Print off the Self evaluation tick sheet to do before and after.
- I gave people a 'notes' sheet split in to the units, so they could make key jottings and also know which modules to go back to in the future to re-access information.

- A questionnaire to do with children before and after was useful. So was an observation pro-forma to do before and after.
- Also I produced a sheet with everyone's name on and after each session they could jot down where they had got to. People worked at different speeds and seemed to forget where they had got to!
- I produced a questionnaire for staff to feed back to me, broken down into actions (teaching, resources and activities) and impacts (learning, behaviour, social skills).

### If another individual or school was attempting to replicate this work, where would they start and what would the essential elements be?

- Start with the self evaluation from the IDP AS site.
- Decide on a small group to work with, preferably staff with a child on the spectrum. Think about LSAs, Lunchtime Supervisory Assistants and teachers.
- Let them have a look at module one... then see if they think it would be useful to them... if they want to continue select a few more key modules to look at. For a primary school we found 1-6 the most useful. 7 was more Secondary, subject based and 8 was a bit repetitive.
- Arrange release time, inset time or meeting time to do modules in pairs.
- If I were to do this again I would trial releasing 2 teachers at a time with their LSAs. I would only train staff with focus children in their class. (LSAs without such youngsters were less motivated... they could always do it another year!)
- Make sure they have log on information, note taking sheets etc.
- ON THE DAY CHECK IT IS ON LINE AND WORKING... you don't want unexpected technical glitches.

### What further developments are you planning to do (or would you like to see others do)?

- I am creating certificates to present to staff as a celebration and record of their IDP autism training.
  - We are starting to use the IDP with staff who are getting these children next year.
  - They are doing some modules in July before they get them and some in September after they get them.
  - I also wish to do some with the Lunchtime Supervisory Assistants who are not also LSAs as they have not yet seen the materials at all.
  - A behaviour project group are looking at the new behaviour IDP to see how they could use it to support their plans.
  - When the new speech and dyslexia IDPs come out we will look at how we can use them for training.
- (2011-2012)

## Supplementary Materials

This report is accompanied in the library by the following supplementary material:

- Getting on to the IDP Autism.doc
- IDP Autism Notes.doc
- registering IDP Autism.doc
- IDP Autism Questionnaire teachers.doc
- Pupil A Feb10.doc
- Pupil A June10.doc

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## About 'What Works Well'

This case study was originally published as part of the 'What Works Well' section of the National Strategies for Education in England. The National Strategies were professional programmes aiming for improvements in the quality of learning and teaching in schools in England. 'What Works Well' involved teaching practitioners from all phases and areas of education sharing accounts of real developments which had improved learning and teaching, and made a difference to pupil progress. 'What Works Well' case studies were designed to support practice transfer and include sufficient detail and resources to enable others to implement the effective practice described. They were reviewed by experts prior to publication as 'User Generated Content' (UGC) under a licence which encouraged reuse and derivative works, but which precluded commercial use.

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