

Camtree Digital Library



Building confidence, consistency and practical skills through a structured professional development programme

Title	Building confidence, consistency and practical skills through a structured professional development programme
Publisher	nasen
Publication date	2026
Download date	2026-03-05 10:47:36
Item License	https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14069/1214

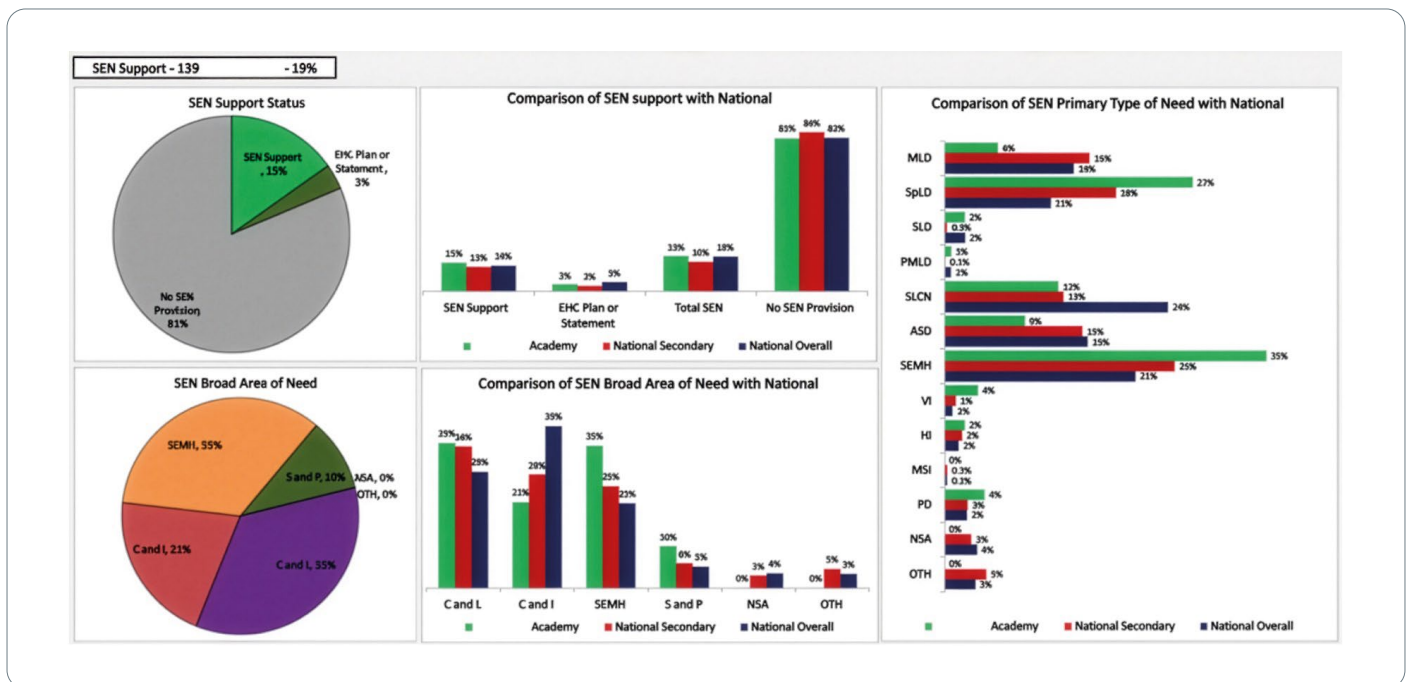


Building confidence, consistency and practical skills through a structured professional development programme

Planning and delivering effective SEND CPD

School/Background Context

This medium-sized secondary school, located in the East of England, is part of a multi-academy trust and includes a sixth form. It serves a diverse student population and is committed to providing inclusive, high-quality education across all key stages.



The Challenge

Over the past couple of years, we have experienced many changes within the SEND department, both in terms of TA turnover and the SENDCo – the team has grown over the past 3 years.

Our biggest challenges were gaps in the Provision Map, so a need to deliver interventions that we had no experience of and a lack of CDP training materials for new and existing members of staff.

Following discussions at SEND Strategy days, we highlighted the areas where training gaps were most prevalent. This is where the CPD programme originated from.

What They Did

At this Academy, the whole SEND team have come together each week to attend training during a directed time slot. All staff have had to attend all sessions. Topics covered have been varied, and different TAs have got different things out of the CDP sessions depending on their prior knowledge. Each SSA kept a learning journal to aid their professional CPD.

Outcomes and Anticipated Impact

The impact achieved at the Academy was positive and SSA's confidence in their knowledge was improved. The biggest impact was seen in the CPD sessions on; Sensory Circuits, Precision Teaching and Lego Therapy. Other noteworthy sessions were SEND Support Plans, STEPS, Reflective Practice, Trauma Informed Practice, Professional Conversations and Social Stories.

Our starting confidence number for the team was 817 and this rose by 379 points to end at 1196.

Impact of the Professional Development Programme

The training had a significant impact on the confidence, knowledge, and practical skills of the TAs, particularly in their ability to implement sensory circuits, social stories, and precision teaching. Several TAs noted that they now feel more confident in their knowledge and interactions with students and parents. One TA mentioned,

"I am more confident in my knowledge... more capable talking to parents."

Practical applications were highlighted as the most beneficial aspect, with a common theme emerging around sensory circuits and structured interventions. A TA shared,

"I learnt best when doing sessions on sensory circuits and Lego therapy—real things with real application."

However, there was some criticism regarding the broadness of the training, with one TA stating,

"This course was too broad and vague... things like 'make SEN accessible' are broadly useless to me. I need to know how to do it."

Other key takeaways included:

- Developing scripts to feel more prepared in tough conversations.
- Learning how to implement strategies without students realising, making interventions feel more natural.
- Improving communication skills when supporting students.

Next Steps

Future Planning

The majority of TAs felt that the strategies they had learned were already embedded in their daily practice and would be sustained. One TA commented,

"Most of the techniques we have learned are already habit, so I assume they will stay in place."

However, others felt that future sustainability would depend on continued reflection and adaptation, rather than automatic implementation. A TA reflected,

"It won't be 'maintained' as such—the benefits of this course were the practical things it suggested, which I wrote down in a list and will do in lessons."

Planned next steps include:

- Keeping notes on interventions, evaluating their effectiveness after lessons.
- Expanding the use of sensory circuits and Zones of Regulation to benefit more students.
- Assessing student needs and adapting interventions accordingly.

Some expressed a desire for more focused, practical training in the future, with one noting,

"Training tells us to help SEND students through things like role play and visualisation but doesn't always show us how to do it in practice."

Overall Reflections and Learning

The TAs widely agreed that the sessions were valuable for professional growth, particularly in expanding their knowledge of intervention strategies and practical applications. One TA remarked,

"I have learned so many skills that will help me be a better SSA—ensuring I carry my SSA toolkit and use it every day."

Collaboration and shared practice were also highlighted as key benefits. A TA commented,

"Talking to others in the team—TAs, SENDCo—helped share ideas and good practice."

However, some felt that training should be more tailored to their roles and experience levels, as one TA observed,

"Some sections seemed to be more targeted at brand-new SSAs, so weren't as helpful for most of our team."

Moving forward, there is a strong consensus that the training has enhanced their ability to support students effectively, but that further development should focus on practical applications rather than theory.

Conclusion

The training was highly beneficial, particularly in building confidence, implementing structured interventions, and encouraging collaboration among the team. Future training would be most effective if it focuses on practical, role-specific strategies rather than broad theoretical concepts.



More inclusive high-quality teaching



More inclusive ethos/culture in the setting