



CASE STUDY REPORT

IDP for Dyslexia and the creative curriculum at Fellside Community 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 awareness of dyslexia and develop more inclusive provision for high incidence needs in order to improve pupil learning, confidence, and ability to work independently.

Aims: The main aim of this development work was to improve awareness of dyslexia and create an inclusive environment for pupils with specific learning difficulties, through training, resources, and support.

Methods: The participants in this project included school staff, parents, local authority staff, and a leading teacher. They worked together to improve awareness of dyslexia and develop more inclusive provision for high incidence needs. The methods used included training programs, grant funding, structured teaching routines, adapted worksheets, use of interactive whiteboards and software, and use of multi-sensory strategies. Parents were also included in the heightened awareness of dyslexia.

Findings: The main findings of this case study are that enthusiastic and committed staff, joined-up thinking, and the use of multi-sensory strategies have had a positive impact on pupil learning, teaching, and school organisation and leadership.

Implications: The findings of this case study suggest that a commitment to developing an inclusive school environment, combined with a comprehensive training plan and positive encouragement, can lead to improved learning outcomes for pupils with specific learning difficulties.

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

Keywords: Nursery education; Primary education; Assessment and target setting; Creativity; Cross-agency working; Inclusion; Self evaluation and review; Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)

Introduction

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

Improving awareness of dyslexia was felt by SMT to be an area of development for school staff so school welcomed opportunities to engage with Gateshead L.A. who were designated 'Pathfinder' for the IDP for Dyslexia/SLCN project.

There were a number of pupils in school who were performing at a higher level for reading and spelling than the criteria set by Gateshead SpLD team for School Action + involvement so we were aware we needed to address their needs in school at School Action. SENCo and LST wanted to know where to focus training and involvement in the IDP seemed an obvious place to start.

From the outset there was an awareness that this project was designed to enable schools to develop more inclusive provision for high incidence needs alongside 'Quality First Teaching'.

Who might find this case study useful?

- Assistant headteacher
- Deputy headteacher
- Governor
- Head of school improvement
- Headteacher
- LA adviser
- Leading teacher
- Parent
- Senior leadership team (SLT)
- SIP (School Improvement Partner)
- Subject leader
- Support staff
- Teacher
- Teaching assistant

Description

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

- All subjects
- Assessment and target setting
- Creativity
- Cross-agency working
- Inclusion
- Self evaluation and review
- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)

How did you intend to impact on pupil learning?

Alongside raising pupils' literacy skills to age-related expectations, the school felt a need to improve pupils' confidence and to develop their ability to work more independently. We were keen to see the impact of programmes for SpLD learners in light of the introduction of our 'Creative Curriculum' in 2009-10. Would the development of more creative focus when delivering the curriculum affect the learning and confidence of these pupils?

To aid our project, the school was able to secure a £2000 grant from the Cultural Partners Initiative and was able to match this sum with a further £2000. This financed the project for targeted groups of pupils with high incidence of specific learning difficulties in Years 2 to 5.

What were your success criteria?

- All staff to demonstrate awareness of 'high incidence' needs
- Confident, enthusiastic staff with increased awareness of dyslexia and to include parents in this heightened awareness
- All staff to move up at least one level beyond 'focusing' by July 2010
- Classroom environments to demonstrate a range of dyslexia -inclusive features: teaching styles (awareness of different preferred learning styles within class); resources (adapted worksheets, scaffolding, use of interactive whiteboards and software); establishing routines and structure to enhance and focus learning;
- Evidence of improved pupil progress and enthusiasm regarding the adaptation of the curriculum

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

School SMT were keen to improve staff knowledge and expertise that would lead to a more SEN inclusive school with high expectations of its pupils.

A training programme was set as part of school's Action Plan which focused on overcoming barriers for SpLD pupils and was delivered by Sarah Balkwill (SENCo) and Jo Goodliffe (LST).

A 'Phonics for Families' session was delivered by SENCo and Literacy co-ordinator to introduce parents to synthetic phonics and phonology.

Who provided you with support?

- Local authority staff
- Other
- Senior management
- Support staff
- Teacher
- Teaching assistant

How were you supported?

The IDP for Dyslexia project became part of the school development plan, warranting additional support for staff and parents and support from two key members of staff, the SEN Co-ordinator and the learning support teacher.

Impact

What has been the overall impact on pupil learning?

All of our children have responded well to the structured, multi-sensory approaches adopted in classes:

Concentration and attention to tasks has improved. Children have felt supported by the use of adapted worksheets and alternative recording strategies such as a writing partner, use of pictures and captions, cloze procedure tasks and specific wordbanks. Their reading is supported by highlighting and explaining specific vocabulary before independent and group reading tasks.

Thoughts you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

"Children seem to be more confident when recording work and learning through the creative curriculum"(teacher)

Quotes you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

- 'The different style of teaching has helped *** make a lot of progress this year.' (teacher)
- 'The structure and clear use of repetition when giving instructions has helped *** this year. He has settled down a lot.' (Class teacher in SA review March 2010)
- 'It's important to use the same language and instructions when addressing SpLD pupils, this develops much needed structure and over-learning.' (Class teacher May 2010)
- 'We have worked very hard with reading, spelling and writing at home. We also encourage *** to use the computer a lot as he enjoys this and forgets that he is learning too.' (Parent at SA review March 2010).

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

Improvement in pupil progress (see data below)

What has been the impact on teaching?

'Most teaching staff were already aware of identification of SpLD pupils. The opportunity to share their expertise with less confident and experienced staff has benefited us all.'

All 14 members of our teaching staff have developed structured teaching routines and resources that have benefited SpLD pupils. They are much more aware of the value of multi-sensory strategies for all learners.(refer to adapted history worksheets; whiteboard screens)

Teaching assistants have been used to deliver specific programmes for SpLD pupils. They have started to suggest adaptations and developments as their confidence has grown.

Individual Education Plan (IEP) targets are more relevant and focused

Awareness of individual needs shown in planning (specific planning sheets attached and highlighted)

More effective use of whiteboard for SpLD learners (refer to photographs and screen print-outs)

Quotes you think are relevant to the impact on teaching

- 'It's important to use the same language and instructions when addressing SpLD pupils, this develops much needed structure and over-learning.' (Class teacher May 2010)
- 'By developing the focus on the creative curriculum, we have taken away the pressure for recording work in written form in the foundation subjects. Pupils with SpLD have been allowed to focus on more kinaesthetic learning.' Class teacher May 2010
- 'Much of our History and Geography topic work has allowed us to plan more subtle or hidden ways to write. This has taken the stress of writing away and allowed all pupils but particularly SpLD pupils to express ideas and opinions in more creative forms.' (Y5 class teacher May 2010)
- 'We have been very careful in not allowing too much information overload when asking children to research topics in ICT. When planning research opportunities we have ensured that certain simple websites are available for SpLD pupils. This has entailed careful planning and preparation.' (Y6 class teacher May 2010)
- 'I have realised the importance of using the T.A. in class to support and develop teaching programmes for SpLD pupils. This has led to an increase in confidence and awareness amongst support staff when working with SpLD pupils.' (Class teacher May 2010)
- 'Staff seem more aware of the learning requirements of SpLD pupils and are growing in confidence when planning individual programmes to suit pupils' varied needs.'

Evidence of impact on teaching

- Evidence from observation and monitoring
- Evidence from planning
- Teacher perceptions

Describe the evidence of impact on teaching

The many and varied quotes from teachers, assistants and even parents show that there has been a substantial effect on staff and parents understanding of dyslexia.

Planning and preparation shows careful thought regarding the needs of all pupils, how they are supported, the need for repetition of instruction and the requirement of overlearning during the plenary session.

Resources show careful consideration of varying learning styles.

Watching pupils following precise and concise instruction, watching how carefully staff ensure good listening and listening to the supportive commenting to pupils by staff is refreshing.

Pupils' enjoyment of the creative curriculum is very evident.

What has been the impact on school organisation and leadership?

Joined-up thinking is very much to the fore and SMT welcome the enthusiastic responses and contributions made by teachers and assistants.

It is felt that the initiation of the Creative Curriculum alongside developing more inclusive provision via the IDP for Dyslexia has been very successful in engaging all learners.

SMT intend to continue to focus on their inclusive practice for pupils with a range of SEN and use of the creative

curriculum in the future and have already applied for additional funding.

Evidence of impact on school organisation and leadership

Training needs have developed through use of the DVD. Already we have plans for further training to be delivered in the autumn term 2010.

Summary

What is the crucial thing that made the difference?

Enthusiastic, open-minded teaching and non-teaching staff who are receptive to suggested adaptations to teaching, routines and ideas have made this such a worthwhile commitment and one that will continue to be followed.

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

- Use the DVD as a way into aspects of training;
- Make best use of specialist staff and resources available from the LA and other agencies;
- Hold learning workshops for parents/carers to develop their confidence in school strategies for learning.
- Develop a policy to ensure the development of a Dyslexia Inclusive School. (See attachment)

What CPD session and resources were particularly useful?

The interactive DVD for the IDP for dyslexia should be used purposefully giving learners regular opportunities to refresh and consolidate previous learning and training participants should be aware that the strategies and resources suggested can be used in mainstream lessons to benefit all learners, not just those who are dyslexic.

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

The first and most vital ingredient of this work is the firm and positive commitment of the senior management team to develop school's inclusion for dyslexic pupils and others who encounter literacy difficulties. This needs to be backed up by the total and positive commitment of school staff.

Inclusion opportunities NEED TO BE part of your SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

It is really important to use the staff questionnaire honestly at the start of the project to allow clear measurable improvements to be tracked;

It is also important that a realistic and comprehensive training plan for school staff is adopted. Don't just see IDP for Dyslexia as a 'one-off' training event but as a start to developing greater knowledge around a range of SEN and a way to discovering more about how all learners learn.

Keep staff enthusiasm going with something positive - school staff need positive encouragement just as our pupils do.

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

- Planning to deliver more training in autumn term on aiding classroom organisation for SpLD pupils
- Planning to deliver further training on developing structure and styles of teaching for all pupils but in particular SpLD pupils
- Planning structured programmes for SpLD pupils focusing in particular on use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning for SpLD pupils

Supplementary Materials

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

- L.A Intervention - checklist of criteria for SA+
- Understanding where SEN pupils lie within the waves model of provision
- KS1 Checklist to establish the strengths and weaknesses of pupils suspected to be dyslexic
- KS2 Checklist for older pupils
- Acting on evidence from parents to establish possible dyslexic traits
- A sample of weekly planning incorporating strategies for all learners
- Example of wordbank and highlighted text
- "We got Rhythm!"
- "Bling your Bike to School Day!"
- Our Tudor Banquet
- Crawlies aren't so creepy!
- Teachers and assistants from Gateshead schools attend IDP training
- Fellside action record
- The starting point - IDP self evaluation questionnaire
- Initial levels of staff confidence & identified actions for staff and pupils
- Removing the barriers of the DVD -A suggested training plan
- Ensuring staff awareness of multi-sensory learning styles
- How to adapt teaching to suit all learning styles
- Pupil progress data demonstrating progress Jan to July 2010
- Fellside Staff Progress information
- Develop a dyslexia inclusive school starting with identification on the School Development Plan

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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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