SENCO Newsletter

News and information for Bristol SENCOs and SEN staff

Winter 2014 No. 33

Welcome...

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that the fine SENCOs of Bristol in possession of the October newsletter must be in want of another before the year's end…and here it is!

It's been a busy term and a very productive one, with all of us pleased to be getting to grips with new ways of working under the 2014 Code. Preparing the school's SEN Information Report has been one of the key undertakings this autumn, and many SENCOs have mentioned that it's been enjoyable to reflect on and describe all the many aspects of excellent provision and practice that exist in their schools. Don't forget to send your website links to sendplus@bristol.gov.uk for the Findability Bristol site.

Now, there is one high-priority mission that remains for the year, and that's to have a well-earned rest over the winter break! Happy holidays to all of you – we look forward to working together again in 2015.
Best wishes,
Jane (LIS)

Contents

Read on and enjoy...

Specialist Team News

Inclusion team update
Simon Claridge and Vikki Jervis have been jointly appointed to the post of principal educational psychologist (PEP) in a job-share capacity.

We say goodbye and thank you to Miriam Hill who has managed the Inclusion Service since April 2014. We wish Miriam well in her new ventures.

Hellos and goodbyes
We say goodbye and thanks to these SENCOs who are leaving post at Christmas:
Rosie Murray, KS2 SENCO at Barton Hill Primary
Sarah Hardisty, SENCO at Notton House School

Welcome to Chris Davies who joins the LA as head of Alternative Learning Provision.

Messages from the SEN Team

Please remember to write outcomes in EHCP reviews, in consultation with parents. SEN/LDD staff need these in order to produce the EHCP, and will have to request them from you if they are not supplied. They are an important part of the new Code and EHCP process. If you have submitted a transfer review without including outcomes, please send them in and ensure there is a short-term outcome for every need. Speech and language therapy (SaLT) and occupational therapy (OT) professionals are being asked, if attending EHCP meetings or transfer reviews, to state the support their service will commit to so that it can be recorded on the EHCP.

New SEN staff:

Post	Staff and Areas
Permanent administrators	Gail Patch and Nick Puzey
Permanent officer	Orla Nolan – north Bristol
Fixed-term officer	Lorraine Mulvaney - city wide
Fixed-term manager	Mary Taylor - post 16/ INM
Fixed-term manager	Caroline Donald - east & central Bristol (starting in January)

The SEN Team has now moved to Parkview Office Campus, Whitchurch Lane, Whitchurch, BRISTOL BS14 0TJ.

Hello from The Hope

Hello from Mina Patel, SENCO
We started working as The Hope Bristol's Virtual School for Children in Care in September 2014. Although Bristol children in care attend schools in Bristol and other local authorities, they are all member of

The Hope Bristol's Virtual School for Children in Care. Their attendance, attainment and educational achievement is monitored, challenged and supported by The Hope. My role is SENCO, as well as KS1 and EYFS lead. We have an ever-moving school population; currently there are around 645 pupils (30% of whom have statements) that we know about! Our pupils attend schools all over the country; therefore, we depend on all you wonderful SENCOs in real schools, working with your designated teacher for Children in Care, to keep the CLA Tracker updated. This then informs our SEN record.

In the main, I envisage my role to be similar to that of Area SENCO and look forward to working in partnership with you all.
My contact details are: mina.patel@bristol.gov.uk
Telephone 0117 3773056

Sensory Support Service news

The **Sensory Support Service** is highly committed to the development of enquiry / evidence based practice and the learning culture of the service. The service is currently working towards achieving a research charter mark. We are creating links to develop our research community and are associate members of the Scottish Sensory Centre - check our new website page on research:

http://sensorysupportservice.org.uk/research/ and check some of our published articles.

Sensory Support Service - Upcoming training and events

Social Emotional development of CYP with Sensory Impairment – 14th April 2015 (afternoon)

Transition information evening for parents – coming soon

We are also trialling our new online course for TAs: Supporting CYP with Sensory Impairment.

For more information contact us: Tel 0117 9038441 / 2 / 3
Check our website: www.sensorysupportservice.org.uk

What does the 'transfer review' process entail?

The transfer review requires the local authority to carry out an EHC needs assessment in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014. Each child or young person's needs must be considered individually and advice sought as prescribed in the Regulations; these include advice in relation to health and social care where the child or young person may need it. New assessment advice will not be needed in all cases. The Regulations for an EHC needs assessment are clear that advice previously provided for any purpose will be sufficient for the assessment where the parents, the professional who gave the advice and the local authority agree. In those circumstances the local authority must not seek new advice.

Parents or the young person must be invited to a meeting with an officer of the local authority to contribute to the review, in particular to focus on the proposed outcomes in the new plan, and this must take place in advance of the EHC plan being finalised. It could take place at a transfer review meeting or at another time. Throughout the process the local authority must have regard to the principles set out in section 19 of the Children and Families Act.

What is the timescale for completing a transfer review?

To transfer a child or young person from a statement to an EHC plan the local authority must undertake a 'transfer review' (EHC needs assessment). The parents must be given at least two weeks' formal notice that the review is to be undertaken and a clear date for when it will begin. The EHC plan must be completed in 14 weeks from the date of that formal notice [Article 21]. The notice should ideally also state when the transfer review meeting will be held

What happens if parents of children who are not deemed to be a high priority insist on being prioritised to conversion from statements over and above priorities we have identified in the transitional order?

Local authorities have until April 2018 to transfer children from statements to EHC plans. A child with a statement remains in the old system until they reach a mandatory transition point or until the local authority decides to transfer them to an EHC plan. Local authorities can set their own priorities preferably in consultation with parents and professionals within the national parameters set out in the transitional order.

Parents of children with statements seeking a reassessment of their child's needs do not have a right to request an EHC needs assessment and their request will be considered as a reassessment in relation to a statement unless the local authority decides to conduct an EHC needs assessment. A local authority does not have to agree to an EHC needs assessment but it should consider the request carefully.

What is the position on the transfer from SEN Statements to EHC Plans for those with support needs under £6k?

The statutory definition of SEN has not changed, nor has the guidance in the Code of Practice on when to assess and when to issue a statutory plan. £6k is not a

threshold for access to EHC needs assessments or to EHC plans. Decisions about provision must be made on an individual basis. Under the new system, as much as the old, there cannot be a blanket policy regarding eligibility Local authorities need to work with schools, young people and parents to determine how best to transfer SEN statements to EHC Plans. It is recommended that a transparent and phased approach is developed with parents and schools.

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions

From September 2014, schools in England will have to meet a duty to support children with medical conditions and follow statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/306952/Statutory_guidance_on_supporting_pupils_at_school_with_medical_conditions.pdf

All schools should produce a medical conditions policy; this can either stand alone or be integrated into an existing first aid or health and safety policy. The Medical Conditions at School website has guidance on creating policies, including a policy pack, plus other helpful resources and information on a variety of conditions. http://medicalconditionsatschool.org.uk/

What should a policy contain?

- o procedures for managing prescription medicines that need to be taken during the school day and on school trips
- o roles and responsibilities of identified staff who manage the administration of medicines
- o the responsibilities of parents in respect of their child's medical needs, including giving written agreement that medicines may be administered
- o the circumstances in which pupils may take non-prescription medicines
- o the school's policy on assisting pupils with long-term or complex medical needs
- o a policy on pupils carrying and taking medicines themselves
- o staff training in managing medicines safely and supporting identified individual children
- o details of record keeping procedures
- o details of the storage of medicines
- o emergency procedures
- o risk assessment procedures
- o arrangements for drawing up Individual Healthcare Plans

An individual healthcare plan (IHP) should include:

- o details of the child's condition and any special requirements
- o the side-effects of the medicine(s) the child takes
- o what would constitute an emergency
- o actions to be taken in an emergency, and what not to do
- o emergency contact details

Supporting SENCO Practice

Thanks to all the SENCOs who made the LIS team members so welcome during recent core visits. Some of you have asked for a checklist to ensure that all the key tasks related to the SEND reforms have been completed, so here's one we prepared earlier!

Documents	Date
Prepare an SEN Information Report and place this on the school website. Make hard copies available.	
Place your current SEND policy on the school website.	
Send the website links for the above documents to Bristol City Council: sendplus@bristol.gov.uk (See appendix 6 of the Local Offer guidance.)	
Plan a date to review your SEND policy.	
Check the date for reviewing the school's accessibility plan.	
Staff and governors	
Inform staff about the SEND reforms and emphasis on teachers' responsibilities.	
Audit staff confidence around SEND knowledge and skills: are any training needs identified?	
Meet with the SEN governor to explain the SEND reforms.	
Pupils and parents	
Inform parents about the changes: send nasen book bag text or a copy of Edward Timpson's letter to parents.	
Consider ways to involve parents and pupils in the review of the policy and SEN Information Report.	
Begin to consider ways to increase parental engagement.	
Begin to consider ways to increase pupil engagement.	
NB.The audit tools in the nasen publication 'Everybody Included' are helpful starting points when review parental and pupil participation.	
Statements and EHCPs	
Ensure you have the transfer timetable (statements to EHCPs) and have booked key meeting dates.	
The graduated response	
Reflect on the current Assess-Plan-Do-Review cycle at your school; do you need to revise any aspect of your practice?	
Review the assessments available: are there any gaps in your range of tools at universal, targeted and specialist level?	

To discuss any of the above in further depth, contact your LIS consultant to arrange a second core visit. If you are unsure who your named consultant is, please email Rachael.reeves@bristol.gov.uk who will put you in touch.

Q: How should I involve parents in a review of my school's SEN Information Report and policy?

A: The SEN Information Report should be written by the school in the first instance, and updated at least annually. Each time it is updated, SENCOs can check with parents how accessible the information is. Alternatively, you may want to draw a parent focus group together at the end of the year to look at the report together. This does not need to be a formal meeting, but it would be useful to have some key questions ready to guide discussion. A similar approach can be used when reviewing the SEN policy; the **nasen** policy update guidance provides a suggested step-by-step procedure to assist with the formulation of a new policy or the updating of an existing one. The policy should be written by the SENCO, with feedback from SLT, staff and governors informing changes to any subsequent draft. This can then be shared with parents to ascertain their opinions. It is worth making clear on your updated policy how parents and pupils were consulted in the policy revision.

Q: How can pupils and students contribute to the SEN policy?

A: Bearing in mind that many pupils or students will experience difficulty at some point, however brief, in their educational lives, schools may wish to engage the help of a student focus group. This could be composed of children both with and without any identified special educational need. Discussion could focus on what would happen if a student had a difficulty with learning or other issue: how this might be identified, what help might be put in place, and how the student might be involved in any plans for support. Aspects of the school's policy could be shared in this meeting, obviously in child-friendly terms, and opinions garnered during this discussion may then inform any modifications to the policy.

Q: Where can I find more ideas about working with parents?

A: *Special Needs Jungle*
http://www.specialneedsjungle.com/ideas-teachers-get-started-parental-co-production/ has a section on working with parents to co-produce documents which is well worth a visit. The page has links to several useful documents including the Parents' Guide to the Code of Practice and a template for a one-page profile. Special Needs Jungle has also produced SEND system flow charts; however, these are quite complex so may not be the most suitable resource to use initially when introducing the new ways of working.
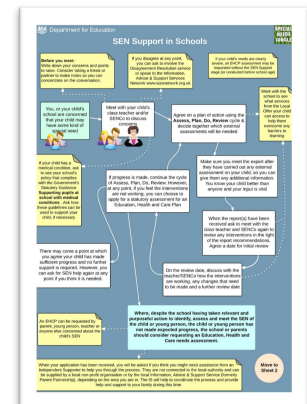
If you haven't already discovered this site, **Special Needs Jungle** (SNJ) is a veritable mine of useful and up-to-date information. Designed as a parent-led resource in conjunction with the DfE, SNJ contains resources such as flow charts for the SEND reforms, top tips for creating one-page profiles to name but a few. You'll also find links to all recently published documents including the SEN and Disability Regulations. Visit http://www.specialneedsjungle.com/ .

See and Learn resources offer practical guidance and activities to help parents, teachers and therapists provide effective early intervention and education for children with Down syndrome (DS) and other children with similar learning needs. Although originally designed with the needs of children with DS in mind, these resources have a key place in reading programmes for any pupil requiring significant support to develop early literacy skills. See and Learn Language and Reading is an evidence-based teaching programme designed to help children with Down syndrome learn to talk and to read. The programme teaches children to understand and use spoken language from first words to early grammar and simple sentences. It also introduces children to reading their first sight words, learning letter-sounds and using phonics for reading.

Developed by the **National Association of Independent Schools & Non-Maintained Special Schools (NASS)** and The University of Northampton, Making Sense of Mental Health (MSOMH) is a user-friendly interactive e-learning programme.

The MSOMH comprehensive online training courses and materials will help school staff to understand the possible mental health issues in children and young people with complex needs, and respond to these mental health needs within the school environment if appropriate. They will identify and record any mental health concerns they may have, as well as allowing staff to share their concerns in the workplace and signpost them to external services where necessary.

The MSOMH online training courses and materials include interactive resources, including videos, podcasts and challenging activities, as well as download resources which you can use in your setting. Particularly aimed at special schools, find out more at http://www.nasschools.org.uk/nass/making-sense-mental-health/ .

Most SENCOs are now members of the **nasen SEND Gateway**. One of this month's most-viewed resources is the Contact a Family factsheet, 'Extra Support in Mainstream Schools', designed to enable you to support parents.

Information for Parents

Although aimed at parents, the sites and resources below are also valuable for schools, clarifying legal duties and new procedures.

IPSEA **Independent Parental Special Educational Needs Advice**

Established as a voluntary organisation in 1983 and registered as a charity (number 327691) in 1989, IPSEA provides free and independent support to parents. Advice is delivered by volunteers who are supported by a team of part-time staff.

Services and resources include:

- An advice line (including legal advice)
- Tribunal advice
- An information service
- Model letters and templates

SENCOs may find many of the resources helpful, including the lengthy 'jargon-busting' list of abbreviations and acronyms, up-to-date legal information and correspondence from the Department for Education. See https://www.ipsea.org.uk/home to find out more.

irwinmitchell solicitors   A large UK law firm, Irwin Mitchell, has worked with deafblind charity Sense and Steve Broach, a barrister at Monckton Chambers, to design legal training for 'Independent Supporters' – a government-funded programme led by the Council for Disabled Children to provide support to families who have children with special educational needs and need additional advice on the reforms.

As part of this project, Irwin Mitchell and its partners have prepared a series of factsheets and template letters on Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

These are available at http://www.irwinmitchell.com/personal/protecting-your-rights/social-healthcare-law/the-children-and-families-act-2014/factsheets-and-template-letters .

Good News from Supportive Parents

The organisation **Supportive Parents** has been awarded some additional funding from the DfE, which we are using to employ additional staff. This is to extend our service to meet the requirements for a Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support (SENDIAS) service as specified in the Children and Families Act. As the Parent Partnership Service our remit was to provide impartial, confidential and free information, advice and support to parents and carers of children with SEN (0-19) about education. SENDIAS services are now expected to provide impartial information, advice and support to parents and carers and children and young people with SEND about education, health and social care relating to SEND from 0-25. All our staff have completed either the national independent supporter training or the IASSN/IPSEA legal training. Both of these cover the law relating to the Children and Families Act (including the regulations and Code of Practice).

The **independent supporter** role is focused entirely on the EHC Planning process for new requests for EHC assessments and transfers from Statements and LDAs to EHC Plans. **Supportive Parents** (as a SENDIAS Service) will continue to offer impartial, free, confidential information, advice and support around all aspects of SEND including EHC assessments and plans.

How do parents or young people get independent support?
There are two organisations which can provide independent support in Bristol. This will enable more parents and young people to be supported through the new process.
Supportive Parents
Parents and young people can contact the Supportive Parents Information and Support Line: 0117 9897725 Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10 am – 2pm during term time (reduced service during the school holidays).

Email – support@supportiveparents.org.uk
Website – www.supportiveparents.org.uk/contact

Kids
Parents and Young People can also get independent support from **Kids,** an organisation which also receives funding from the DfE to provide independent supporters for parents and young people to assist them through the EHC assessment and planning process. Contact details:
Telephone :   0117 9476111
Email :   IS.southwest@kids.org.uk

I hope this information will be useful to you.

*Davina Evans - Bristol Local Coordinator, Supportive Parents*

To IEP or not to IEP:

that is the continuing question…

The 2014 Code has prompted a renewed discussion around the place of IEPs. Many schools are still appraising their use, and considering other possible ways to document targets and progress. It's worth taking time to review your practice, and reconsider the place of IEPs as part of the Assess-Plan-Do-Review cycle.

IPMs versus IEPs

Our first consideration is to identify which children need an IEP or similar document. Pupils and students with education, health and care plans or statements should all have individual provision maps (IPMs), clearly outlining the support put in place to meet their specific needs. There is no reason why targets and expected outcomes should not be recorded somewhere on the IPM, rather than having an IEP as an additional document. A pupil passport can carry some of the same information as the IPM and complement it – there is no need to have an IEP as well.
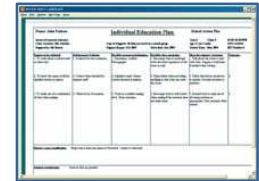
IEPs at the SEN Support stage

At the next level, we need to consider whether pupils at the SEN Support stage, (formerly School Action and School Action Plus) require an additional plan. These pupils will have personalised targets as part of usual classroom practice, so do they need additional goals on an IEP? The answer here seems to be both yes and no; targets suggested by, say, a speech and language therapist or a behaviour improvement consultant need to be recorded separately, so an IEP may still be useful here. However, if the strategies to support these targets also appear on an IPM then the targets themselves need to be on the same one document, rendering any other forms unnecessary.

Alternatives

Let's take a typical scenario and look at alternatives. A common lament is that IEPs have a tendency to stay in files where they're not referred to; if this is the case, we need something else to inform classroom practice and the learning process. A class support plan could fulfil our wish!

A child at the SEN Support stage who has significant needs will have targets set by the class teacher along with their peers; however, they may need specific teaching and learning approaches and certain interventions. A support plan, drawn up with parents and the pupil themselves, can list needs and strategies in a clear, simple format, such as the one below:

Name: Date: How I learn best: How you can help me: My targets: • … • …	Access/inclusion strategies: • …. • ….. *These may be advised by an outside agency and include any specific approaches, e.g. for behaviour
In class *Note any strategies for supporting adults to be aware of here.* • … • …	**Out of class** *Note any interventions the pupil may be receiving here – monitoring summary notes could be entered on the reverse.*

Observation, review and pupil progress meeting notes can all be written on the back; monitoring summary notes for interventions could also be entered here. Alternatively, it may be preferable to record intervention monitoring in another location; just ensure that there are clear communication routes between class and support staff, as time to share progress updates can be difficult to find in a busy school day.

Plans like the above example are useful to all adults who work with a particular child, and provide a clear guide for the content of parent and pupil meetings.
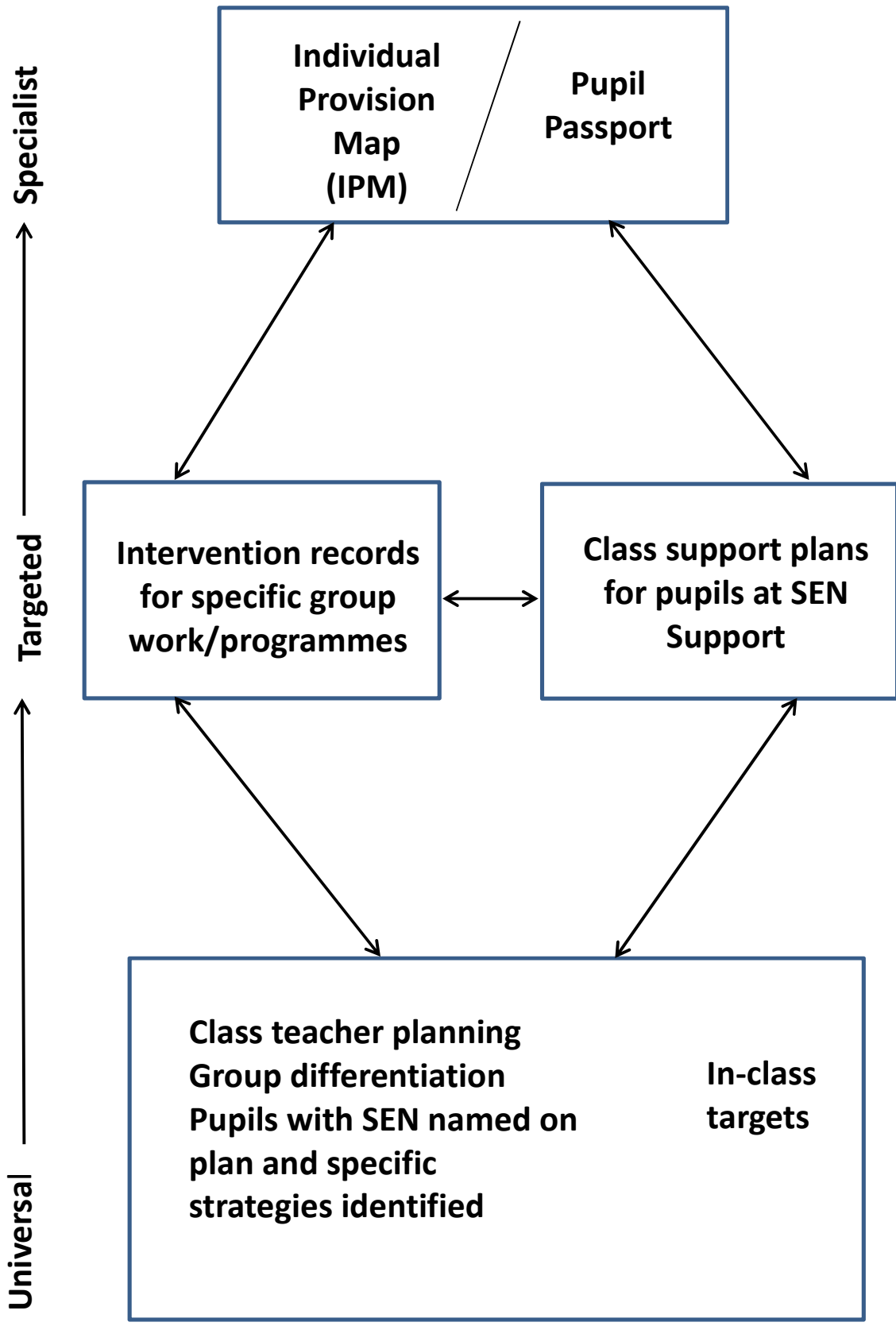
So, who no longer needs an IEP?

At universal level, every pupil in a class will have targets for learning. Teachers differentiate planning to meet the needs of all their learners; pupils with SEN whose needs fall outside the usual range of differentiation within the class should be named on lesson plans along with activities adjusted to their requirements. Do these children need IEPs in addition? There are differences of opinion here; however, it would seem reasonable to argue that as long as progress is carefully monitored and teachers feel confident about adapting approaches in the classroom, there is no need for any other documentation to be in place.

Last term's newsletter contained an example of a pupil passport; in this edition we're able to share an alternative format. Thanks to Lisa Rawcliffe, SENCO at Air Balloon Hill Primary, who has kindly let us have sight of the document she has devised to record her school's graduated response:

Name: Date of plan:	Class:		Category of need:
Assess – What evidence do we have to suggest SEN support is needed?		How have we consulted with parents/carers? How have we consulted with the pupil?	
Plan - What can we put in place that is additional and different to our Wave 1 offer?			
Cost –			
Do – Who/What/When? Use this section to keep up to date with progress if an additional adult is carrying out intervention.			
Review – After 3 terms, what difference can we see?			

The flow chart on the next page, devised by Tracey Nairn from the LIS, may be useful when you come to consider your current practice; do your graduated approach and recording decisions mirror these stages?

Specialist

Individual Provision Map (IPM) / **Pupil Passport**

Targeted

Intervention records for specific group work/programmes ⟷ **Class support plans for pupils at SEN Support**

Universal

Class teacher planning Group differentiation Pupils with SEN named on plan and specific strategies identified   **In-class targets**

New SEN Code of Practice and Participation

"Nothing about me without me" (Delblanco et al.)

There are many tools available to us for recording children and young people's views (see below for a sample). However, participation is quite a complex issue which goes beyond having a toolkit for eliciting views.

Brief Background Information

- The participation agenda is not new. The UK signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991. Articles 12 and 13 state that children have a right to receive and impart information, to express an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account in any matters affecting them from the early years. Their views should be given due weight according to their age, maturity and capability. See also Human Rights, the Salamanca Agreement.

- "It is simply not possible to ask what their views are when they have little or no experience of how to express what they may want, are not aware of what might happen and do not know what the context is" (Grieg et al, 2014). While participation has recently taken a more central role in the new SEN Code of Practice (2014), we will be more likely to develop meaningful participation if it is part of a whole-school ethos and approach i.e. not just an 'SEN' issue.

- As participation is based on the principle of democracy, some view it as key in leading to the empowerment of young people (Grieg et al, 2014). Therefore it may be helpful to consider participation as one aspect of preparing young people to be an active adult member of society. This is particularly relevant when we consider that the new code gives 16 year-olds more decision making power over finances, assessment and information sharing.

What is PCP?

PCP or Person Centred Planning is often referenced in conjunction with work on participation (e.g. the principles of Early Support which underpin Bristol's new EHCP makes direct reference to PCP). Therefore, the following definitions may be helpful:

- **Person-centred approaches:** A way of working that puts children, young people and families at the centre, advocating that everyone has the right to exercise choice and control in directing their lives and support.

- **Person-centred thinking:** A range of skills and tools that help to focus on the person, their gifts and skills, what is important to them and what provides good support for them. Person-centred thinking is the foundation of person-centred planning.

- **Person-centred planning:** A continual process of listening to what is important to the person now and in the future with the support of family and friends, and creating action or changes based upon this.
- **http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/earlysupport**

Some questions to mull over

Does this mean that all pupils have to attend lengthy meetings?
Participation does not necessarily mean that all children need to attend all meetings. Settings and schools will be on their own journey of developing their understanding and practice in participation. Children, young people, parents and carers will also have varied skills and experiences in terms of participation. Therefore, it may be helpful to think about participation in terms of teaching/mediation; that is: what level of mediation/teaching/support will be needed in order to enable this child/young person to be involved in the decision-making which affects them? If being physically present in a meeting is not appropriate (even with support), then are there other ways in which they can participate? What small steps can we take throughout the year that might build up to enabling them to take part in a review, for example? Is there a way of making the process very clear and then enabling the parents/child to decide how they want to participate?

Who is best placed to elicit a pupil's views, or those of a parent/carer?
We need to be aware of the impact of the power relationships inherent in our roles as adults when meeting children, young people, parents and carers. Could the status of a member of staff have an impact on a child's ability to participate or the nature of the views they may be attempting to elicit from them?

Should I be evaluating our school's practice using the Ladder of Participation?
Some of us are already familiar with the concept of the ladder of participation. Hart's ladder has been criticised for implying that all participation activities should aim to be at the top rung of the ladder and that progress is linear from one rung to the next (Tisdall & Liebel, 2008). In fact, different forms of participation may be appropriate in

different circumstances. Writers have now moved away from the idea of a ladder to create a less hierarchical typology (Hudson, 2014).

What's the point of telling anyone what I think? What difference will it make?
A clear message from research involving disabled young people is that if they are giving their views, they would like to know what was done with the information they shared and what changed as a result. Therefore, do we need to go beyond merely recording their views? How do they know what changed as a result of giving their opinion?

What if he/she won't talk to anyone?
Children in care and young people who are at risk of exclusion are particularly vulnerable to going unheard. A 'questions and answer' interview format may not work for pupils who have social/communication needs, who struggle to trust adults or who have had little experience of being asked for their views. Some forward planning and creativity (e.g. take photos of your favourite parts of the school, make a video, walk about) may be useful here.

How do we record sensitive or difficult information in such a way that maintains accuracy (particularly as we work within a 'deficit model') while not causing distress?

The concept of 'transparency' is an important and linked theme under the new legislation. In the future, it is hoped that if schools and professionals are open and transparent with parents/carers (e.g. by sharing our thinking along the process or by being open and respectful about areas where views differ), there may be less requirement for formal disputes and tribunals. In our work the need for transparency may lead to situations which require some careful thinking, e.g. how we balance the need to involve the young person while sharing and discussing very sensitive but key information? Do they know who will be reading their views (if that's how they choose to share them)?

How Do I Get Started?

The following websites are a good source of information for specific tools:

www.participationworks.org.uk
www.personalisingeducation.org
http://inclusive-solutions.com/person-centred-planning/
http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk/
http://www.familiesleadingplanning.co.uk/

"I Want to Choose Too" (Watson, Feiler and Tarleton, 2007, Bristol University) is a compilation of resources for pupils with little or no speech.

TWS will be running training on PCP on January 20th 2015 at Eden Grove. See www.tradingwithschools.org to book. For further support, schools can contact TWS Inclusion on 0117 9031650 / 9222444.

Thanks to Aoife McNally (EP) for this guidance.

Text to Speech: Ivona MiniReader

Ivona MiniReader is useful for anyone looking for a reliable, free text to speech utility for reading PDFs and web pages. Download the trial version of Ivona Text Reader, which includes MiniReader. You can carry on using MiniReader free after the Text Reader trial has expired. Go to http://www.ivona.com/en/mini-reader/ and click on the Free Download button.

Text to Speech: Balabolka
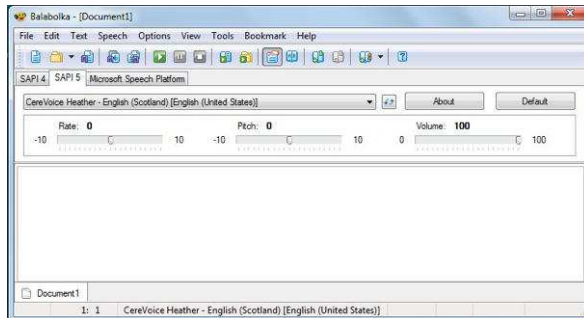
If you haven't yet discovered text-to-speech software, a good way to start is to explore some of the free products available. Balabolka (Russian for chatterbox), is a download which can convert basic text to speech, alter the appearance of text to make it more accessible, read eBooks and create audio files.

The toolbar can be simplified by removing unwanted icons:
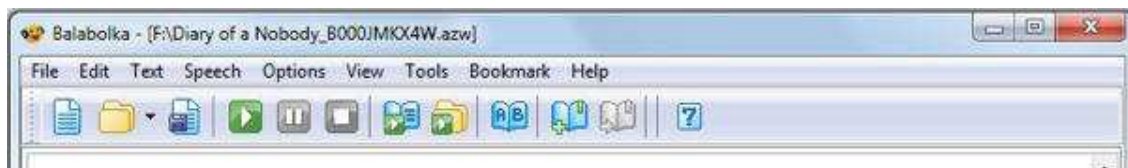
Fonts and background colours are also easy to change:
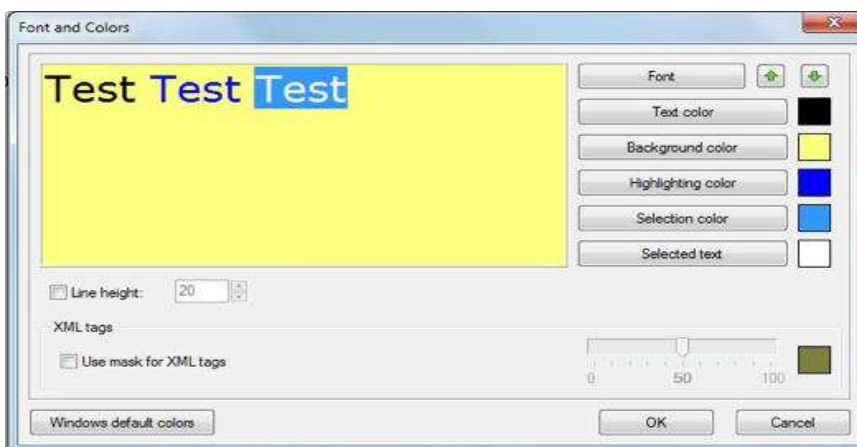
Balabolka will read the text aloud when you insert the cursor at the start of the text and then click on the green '**Play**' button. Balabolka highlights each word as it is spoken and changes the colour of text that has been read (by default from black to blue, but this can be changed), to make it easier for you to see where you are.

Balabolka can convert text into audio files in MP3 and other formats and can also use use the Google Translate facility.

For a more detailed guide to Balabolka and its functions, please contact jane.Lindsay@bristol.gov.uk .

The Periodic Table of Apps

Not just selected for pupils with SEN, the table nevertheless contains apps which suit a range of learners.

ICT Training at Claremont School

Boardmaker	30th January
Communicate:InPrint	5th February
iPads for beginners	4th March
iPads advanced	19th March
Apps for SEND - Primary & Secondary focus	13th March
Apps for SEND - PMLD & communication difficulties focus	14th March.

Other training: Manual Handling - Jan 13th, Feb 10th, March 3rd, April 21st.
Inclusive PE for Secondary schools - January 20th.
Please contact Ruth Glasspool to book: ruth.glasspool@claremontbristol.org.uk

Speech and Language Therapy: how to refer

To   SENCOs

Primary Schools, Bristol

Dear SENCOs,

Re: Making referrals to Speech and Language Therapy Service

It has become apparent recently that some schools have been asking parents to get their children referred to our service via their GP, rather than making the referrals themselves. This is not necessary as all referrals go through the same pathway and are subject to the same referral criteria.

I would like to reassure you that we still accept referrals from schools as we have always done. We would, in fact, prefer to receive a referral from school than from the GP as you are able to give us the information we need about the child's ability in school.

May I take this opportunity to remind you that we require a supplementary information sheet to be completed for each referral? This enables us to see whether the referral meets our criteria, and who is best suited to see the child. The form can be obtained by emailing:

kelly.wilkins@nbt.nhs.uk for schools in south Bristol
eleanor.mcgrath@nbt.nhs.uk for schools in North Bristol NHS Trust
nikki.jones@nbt.nhs.uk for schools in east/central

Thank you for your help with this.

Yours faithfully,

Jenny Moultrie
Speech and Language Therapist, Team Leader, East and Central
Eastgate House, Eastgate Rd, BS5 6XX Tel 0117 340 8070
Sally Chan
Speech and Language Therapist, Team Leader, North
Claremont School, Henleaze Park, BS9 4LR Tel 0117 414 3842
Mary Gale
Speech and Language Therapist, Team Leader, South
Osprey Court, Whitchurch Lane , BS14 0BB Tel 0117 340 8096

Please find the Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service referral form as an appendix to this newsletter.

Specialist Teachers' Section

Examination Access Arrangements: Updates from the BDA

It is not possible to use a human reader for the GCSE English Reading paper, but according to JCQ regulations it is now possible to use a computer reader or examination pen. The computer reader is allowed as it really only decodes the words for the examinee, rather than a human reader who may (unintentionally) place emphasis and meaning through reading with tone, pausing etc.

Computer readers for use with non-interactive PDF exam papers: information from the BDA

This fact sheet details some of the computer reader packages that can be used for reading aloud GCSE, 'A' level or Functional Skills exams. The packages listed here have been tested with example papers and in general found to be compatible but this is not an exhaustive list.

Adobe Read Out Loud

This is the built-in text-to-speech tool within Adobe Reader, which is free for Windows. It can be turned on through the View Menu and is controlled through keyboard shortcuts. Although it is built-in, it is not recommended for use with an exam paper as it is designed to continually read a document. It is possible to click on any paragraph to hear it. Download from **Adobe web**.

Ivona MiniReader

This is a free text-to-speech toolbar from the voice company Ivona. It allows you to select text in documents, web pages and PDF files and then press play to hear it read aloud. It works well with PDF exam papers. However it does not highlight text as it reads aloud and you will need to purchase or install voices if you prefer a higher quality voice than the default Windows voice. Available from **Ivona**.

ClaroRead SE

This is the cut-down version of the reading and writing support tool ClaroRead, containing just the text-to-speech tools. It can read aloud text with colour highlighting in Word, web pages and PDF files. It works well with PDF exam papers. The candidates place the curser at the point they wish to hear the text from and then press play. ClaroRead SE contains 2 high quality voices and is a cost-effective tool. Available from **B.D.A. Store**.
N.B. If your centre already has ClaroRead but requires the SE (Special Edition, produced for a B.D.A. International Conference) version for use in exams, contact **Claro Software** for a licence.

Texthelp Read & Write Gold for Schools

This is an extensive reading and writing support toolbar. This contains a tool called PDF Aloud which opens PDF files and allows them to be read aloud with dual colour highlighting. The software comes with a number of high-quality voices. The Schools Site Licence contains a Teachers Toolkit which enables teachers to limit which functions a candidate has access to (for example removing access to dictionaries and spell checkers) Available from **Texthelp**.

Summary

	Adobe Read Out Loud	Ivona Reader	ClaroRead SE	Read & Write Gold
Control method	Keys	Floating toolbar	Floating toolbar	Floating toolbar
Voices included	No	No	Yes	Yes
Highlighting in PDF files	No	No	Yes	Yes
Any cost?	No	No	Yes	Yes

© B.D.A. New Technologies Committee and Abi James. December 2013

BDA: http://bdatech.org/what-technology/text-to-speech/exams/computer-readers/

The Dyslexia/SpLD Professional Development Framework

Stages and how they relate to roles associated with teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia/SpLD

The Dyslexia/SpLD Professional Development Framework has five stages which relate to various professional roles found in a variety of settings and the increasing levels of specialist knowledge and skills required of those roles as their careers progress. Each stage builds on the knowledge and skills of the previous stage. These reflect the type of support learners may require.

Stages	Type of Support	Professional Roles
Stage 1	Universal	All staff teaching and supporting learners in all levels of educational setting
Stage 2	Targeted	Practitioners confident with planning, preparing and teaching with a range of targeted specialist and differentiated resources. Practitioners in specialist settings
Stage 3	Targeted Strategic	Higher Level Teaching/Special Assistant in all settings SEN Teacher SENCo Teacher in main stream seeking to specialise in dyslexia/SpLD CPD leader for teaching schools

Stage 4	Specialist	Dyslexia/SpLD Specialist Teacher
		Dyslexia/SpLD Advisory Teacher
		Specialist Teacher Assessor
Stage 5*	Specialist Complex	Specialist Teacher Assessor
		Dyslexia/SpLD Advisor
		Dyslexia/SpLD Trainer

* Teachers working at this level would be expected to be qualified to undertake full cognitive diagnostic assessments for dyslexia-SpLD.

Development to the next stage: briefly describes the knowledge, skills and understanding required for progression to the next stage.

Stage 1 [Universal]

Practitioners at Stage 1 are likely to have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) or equivalent knowledge and experience. At this level, most will be working in an educational setting, or have recent experience of working in such a setting. Most teaching assistants (TAs) will have a Level 3 qualification relevant to their role, or the equivalent knowledge and experience. Practitioners at this stage are likely to have accessed the Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) and/or the Teacher Development Agency (TDA) Toolkit for SEN to support and inform their practice.

Transition from Stage 1 [Universal] to Stage 2 [Targeted]

From a knowledge perspective the transition from Stage 1 to Stage 2 requires a professional to have a more developed understanding of language and literacy development and of theories relating to dyslexia. From a competency perspective, the professional is then expected to use this knowledge to be able to identify and assess learners with dyslexia/SpLD with greater independence and prepare challenging but appropriate targets. A professional should be confident with planning, preparing and teaching with a range of specialist and differentiated resources as appropriate to meet the specific needs of a learner. A professional at Stage 2 is expected to be able to contribute confidently and with expertise to multi-disciplinary teams and institutional initiatives that support learners with dyslexia/SpLD.

Transition from Stage 2 [Targeted] to Stage 3 [Targeted Strategic]

From a knowledge perspective the transition from Stage 2 to Stage 3 is not considerable. The main developments take place in the competency and attributes strands [C,D,E and F], particularly with respect to managing and supporting other professionals to support learners with dyslexia/SpLD. However, a professional at Stage 3 is expected to have a greater understanding of the relationship between language, literacy and learning, the relationship between phonological awareness and phonological processing and the structure of language. Within a setting they should be able to advise on strategies and appropriate teaching materials and monitor the progress of all learners with dyslexia/SpLD. A professional would be expected to lead multi-disciplinary teams, contribute to institutional improvement initiatives which support learners with dyslexia/SpLD and evaluate the impact of relevant CPD in the setting.

Transition from Stage 3 [Targeted Strategic] to Stage 4 [Specialist]

From a knowledge perspective the progression from Stage 3 to Stage 4 is a very important element of the transition, as Stage 4 requires an expert knowledge and understanding of the development of the language system and the interrelationship between language, literacy and learning development. This is combined with a deep knowledge of dyslexia and other SpLDs and how they can affect language, learning and literacy development. The professional at this level will have to possess a more informed knowledge of assessment, in order to conduct tests of attainment for learners who may have dyslexia/SpLD and subsequently devise and implement teaching and support plans for other professionals to follow. From a competency perspective, the professional at this level may be in an advisory role (perhaps combined with a management role) and will therefore need to keep abreast of recent developments and evidence based practice in the field in order to advise on the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia/SpLD and on valuable CPD practice. The high profile nature of the role will require that the professional is able to demonstrate personally as well as advise on leading and working in diverse teams, developing effective relationships with learners, parents/carers and a range of professionals.

Transition from Stage 4 [Specialist] to Stage 5 [Specialist Complex]

From a knowledge perspective the progression from Stage 4 to Stage 5 focuses on understanding the complex relationship between dyslexia and other difficulties such as Specific Language Impairment and dyscalculia and the causal, cognitive theories which differentiate various SpLDs. A key element of the progression from Stage 4 is at the competency level and in particular the ability to employ a range of psychometric assessment tools in order to carry out diagnostic assessments for dyslexia-SpLD and make recommendations for the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia/SpLD. These skills may also be required to fulfil requirements for assessment for special arrangements for public examinations that apply in your setting and for any other benefits to which dyslexic/SpLD learners may be entitled. The professional will need to be able to lead and advise on improving outcomes for learners with dyslexia/SpLD, mentor, coach and train others and contribute to developing policies and practice across settings.

## The Y7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium

The literacy and numeracy catch-up premium provides schools with an additional £500 for each year 7 student who did not achieve at least level 4 in reading and /or maths at the end of key stage 2.

It is provided to all state-funded schools with a year 7 cohort, including special schools, alternative provision (AP) settings and pupil referral units (PRUs).

Dyscalculia

Now, more than ever before, class teachers need to acquire knowledge and skills on a range of special educational needs in order to enable all children in their classes to make optimal progress. Under the new Code of Practice, one of a SENCO's key duties is to provide ongoing support and advice to colleagues to increase their skills and confidence in this area. Don't forget to make use of the professional development materials available online, the Advance Teaching Materials. Dyscalculia is becoming a growing area of interest, and you can find some helpful study modules on this subject at www.advanced-training.org/module4. The study unit covers:
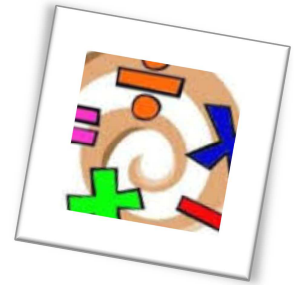
Online Guidance on the SEN Reforms from the Dyslexia SpLD Trust

1. Take a trip to http://www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk/4/resources/2/for-schools-and-local-authorities/279/online-guidance-on-the-sen-reforms/ to find guidance for schools to support the implementation of the SEND reforms, for children and young people with literacy difficulties, specific learning difficulties and dyslexia. You can either view the full guidance or download individual resources. The guidance contains clear information on effective practice, school funding reforms, the graduated approach and the local offer plus activities for use with staff in school.

The Driver Youth Trust has launched a new website for the Drive for Literacy programme alongside a new campaign to engage teachers and parents called #YouKnowADyslexic launched by Eddie Izzard, who is himself dyslexic.

The new Drive for Literacy website provides a free, practical resource for teachers, parents and pupils who want to understand more about dyslexia and how to identify and teach dyslexic children. The free resources, which are aimed at everyday situations and accessible to all in a language that is easy to understand, are based on a series of key questions asked by parents and educators, including:

- What are the signs of dyslexia?
- What do I do if I suspect my child might be dyslexic?
- How can teachers better support dyslexic children?
- How does it feel to be dyslexic?

The Driver Youth Trust is a member of the national Dyslexia SpLD Trust, and the new Drive for Literacy website will feature resources from the Trust and other associated partners. http://driveforliteracy.co.uk/

CPD and Interventions

Inclusion Service: Training for Terms 3 and 4, 2015

LIS

Course	Date and Venue
Numicon Intervention (5 sessions)	13 Jan 09:15 West Town Lane
Dyslexia Awareness	27 Jan 09:00 – 12:00 West Town Lane
Talking Partners@Secondary (a 2-day course)	9 and 10 Feb 09:15 – 15.30 Venue TBA
SENCO Conference	9 Mar 09:00 – 16:15 BAWA
P Scales	18 Mar 13:30 – 16:00 Eden Grove
Provision Mapping	24 Mar 09:00 – 12:00 West Town Lane

BIS

Course	Date and Venue
Developing a nurturing school	26 Jan 09:30 – 15:30 Eden Grove
Understand and support pupils with ADHD	03 Feb 09:30 – 12:30 Sea Mills CC
Difficult behaviours: no more hitting, spitting, biting, screaming and kicking (2-day course)	10 Feb and 26 Mar 09:30 – 12:30 Sea Mills CC

EPS

Course	Date and Venue
Developing motivation	15 Jan 09:30-16:00 Sea Mills CC
SEND CoP: Person-centred planning	20 Jan 09:30-16:00 Eden Grove
Mindfulness in schools	28 Jan 09:30-13:00 Eden Grove
Developing resilience in young people and adolescents	26 Feb 09:30-16:00 Engineers' House
Working with parents: the new SEN CoP	25 Mar 09:30-16:00 Sea Mills CC

Please find further details and booking information at

http://www.tradingwithschools.org/Training/

talkingpartners@secondary

*"Students who aren't good at listening, have a limited vocabulary and struggle to contribute to a discussion cannot learn well in the classroom. They are at a serious disadvantage in the labour market too. In an increasingly service-driven economy, employers regularly rate communication skills as key to employability. And yet we still do too little in schools to promote language development. Speaking and listening are learned first in a child's life, used much more than reading or writing in adulthood, but taught least. Reading and writing, by contrast, are learned later, used less but taught most." (Jean Gross, CBE, 2013.)*

Talking partners@secondary has been developed as an intervention programme to address specific aspects of language and social communication skills with an expected positive impact upon learner behaviour, self-esteem and general emotional well-being.

Talking partners@secondary is delivered to a small group of learners over a period of 10 weeks. Maximum efficacy is achieved with a ratio of 1:3 and where the programme is delivered by teacher or HLTA. The programme consists of an hourly taught group session and 1or 2 follow up sessions each week to consolidate the taught skills (this could be on an individual basis).

An important aspect of the programme is the use of visual 'frameworks' to support learners with formulating ideas, sequencing, structuring and delivering their talk. Although it was originally written to support students in KS3, the programme has also been used effectively with those in KS4. Students with a range of needs have benefited from taking part in the programme including those with ASD, SLCN and EAL.

Talking partners@secondary has been developed by Deb Howarth (BSc, MSc) and Deb Nicholl-Holt (BSc, MSc, PG cert) who are now teachers from Ladywood Outreach Service, Bolton. Both have many years of experience working in mainstream and special settings (nursery, primary and secondary phases of education) with learners who have communication and interaction needs. It was inspired by the Talking Partners intervention programme which was developed by the Specialist Programmes Consultant team from Bradford. This team, including Clare Reed and Jan Hilditch, have worked in conjunction with their Bolton colleagues to produce
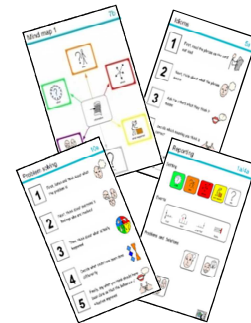
The next 2 day course, which will enable participants to deliver the programme, will be held on February 9th and 10th (venue to be arranged).

To book a place visit http://tradingwithschools.org

INFERENCE TRAINING

Inference training is a group intervention for pupils in KS2 and KS3 who decode adequately but fail to get full meaning and enjoyment from their reading. Evidence suggests one in ten pupils who decode satisfactorily, fail to get full meaning and enjoyment from reading. We also provide a range of best practice comprehension material and teaching strategies for class teachers in KS1 and 2.

Inference training is adapted from the work of Nicola Yuill and Jane Oakhill, "*Effects of Inference Awareness Training on Poor Reading Comprehension"* (1988). Subsequent work by Cain, Oakhill, Barnes and Bryant, 2001 and Cain and Oakhill 2011, shows the key role inference making plays in reading comprehension.

Weak comprehenders may..	Effective readers..

Weak comprehenders may..
- Focus on individual words/sentences
- Attach most importance to decoding
- Have a passive style of reading
- Have lower expectations of text making sense and fewer comprehension monitoring strategies
- Read fewer books and are less sensitive to story structure
- Fail to activate background knowledge or visualise
- Apply less integration and inference
- Have a less efficient working memory.

Effective readers..
- Know that understanding is the goal of reading
- Activate background knowledge and working memory
- Integrate information/ideas and make inferences to get gist
- Have high expectations of text making sense
- Make predictions, ask own questions and watch out for "answers"
- Can visualise when appropriate
- Monitor meaning, notice breakdown and use breakdown strategies
- Read frequently and enjoy reading.

Inference training demonstrates key comprehension strategies through "instructional conversations" in groups to help boost reading comprehension. Through reading and interactive discussions, the group:

- Activate and apply prior knowledge to their reading and use title cues to predict
- Identify key words and elaborate on them to enhance meaning, and develop vocabulary
- Generate their own questions and answer them
- Generate inferences and integrate meaning as they read to build a gist
- Summarise a short text extract using visualisation, quick pictures, picto-words and a 10 word or less headline
- Retell an extract to emphasise the gist.

Group intervention

The inference training materials include short text extracts for KS2 and KS3 pupils with support notes for adults. Many extracts are from recent award winning titles which have been carefully chosen to contain rich opportunities for pupils to discuss and enjoy. Further readings of the novels are also recommended using multiple copies of texts so that pupils can apply their skills to whole texts.

The group intervention involves groups of 4 pupils taught by teachers or teaching assistants. Two sessions of 40 minutes a week for ten weeks.

Outcomes

Inference training featured in both the 2007 and 2013 editions of Professor Greg Brook's study "*What Works for children and young people with literacy difficulties".* Both editions identified inference training as an intervention that offers *significant gains for pupils with weak comprehension skills.* The latest pupil impact data from 326 pupils in KS2 and KS3 shows that during 14-20 inference training sessions, most pupils make 2 sub-levels progress in reading or an increase in reading comprehension of 12 months over 8-10 weeks.

Training for schools 2015

1. Inference Intervention Training (Trading with Schools CPD Catalogue)

2 half days training to deliver the inference intervention for English subject leader or teacher with a teaching assistant.

Dates: 23rd January and 6th February;
     27th February and 13th March;
    24th April and 8th May
Cost: £160 ppn including training manual and resources
Booking: www.tradingwithschools@bristol.gov.uk

2. Teaching Inference in the Classroom

Bespoke training for class teachers in KS1/2 either as twilight or part of INSET agenda.

Contact: Jan Armstrong and Debbie Miles (accredited trainers)
Tel: 0117 9031353
Email: jan.armstrong@bristol.gov.uk or debbie.miles@bristol.gov.uk

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LIS Support for Individual Pupils

Do you have pupils whose progress is causing concern?
The Learning Improvement Service can help!

A support visit includes:
- In-class observation
- Scrutiny of the pupil's work
- Discussion with class teacher/SENCO/TA
- Visit note with suggestions for teaching strategies

Cost: £150

To request a visit please download the LIS form, attached as an appendix to this newsletter, and send to rachael.reeves@bristol.gov.uk .

Educational Psychology Service

Tuesday 20th January 2015

SEND CoP: Person Centred Planning (PCP)

Techniques to enhance practice

A one-day course for the leads in school for eliciting views of young people/ parents.

This course will be of particular interest to SENCos and class teachers in mainstream and special schools. However, learning mentors, parent support workers and tutors may also find it useful.

Description: The **SEND Code of Practice (2014)** reflects the changes introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014. These include a focus on the participation of children and young people and parents in decision-making at individual and strategic levels.

On this course you will explore **person-centred approaches:** a way of working that puts children, young people and families at the centre, advocating that everyone has the right to exercise choice and control in directing their lives and support, and **person-centred thinking:** a range of skills and tools that help to focus on the person.

We will consider the principles underpinning PCP, explore some tools and techniques, consider barriers to PCP, and how to overcome them. You will have a chance to reflect on how to develop PCP in your setting/ work environment.

Outcome By the end of the day you will:

- understand the principles underpinning the participation agenda
- have increased knowledge of techniques to enhance participation of pupils and parents/ carers
- have considered the appropriate selection of tools for different situations and people
- have explored some of the dilemmas involved in PCP.

Course information Ref: 12-0115-T004

Date: Tuesday 20th January 2015   Time: 9:00 for 9:30 start – 16:00

Book online at www.tradingwithschools.org

Tales from the City

Book Buddies at Air Balloon Hill Primary

At Air Balloon Hill Primary, staff are constantly looking for ways to boost children's progress and interest in reading; under the leadership of Rob Worsfold, headteacher, the school has invested in a reading volunteer scheme which is paying dividends for both the love of books and the data, and I knew you newsletter readers would want to know about it!

Book Buddies is the name of a voluntary group consisting of parents, grandparents and occasionally sixth form students, led by Becky Cox, a trained teacher who now works as a teaching assistant. The group was started to encourage children who were reading below age-related expectations; some of these pupils needed continued support after Reading Recovery in order to maintain their rate of progress. As Becky says, Book Buddies aims to 'improve the way children read, enabling them to be independent problem-solvers who read with understanding and enjoyment.' All children who have had a book buddy made good (3.7+ points) or outstanding (4+) progress.

So, how do they do it?

Volunteers are recruited through the school newsletter and website. The first group was initially trained by Erica Rooney, reading recovery teacher, who covered basic reading skills, ways to encourage children and how to assess and use running records. Nowadays, Becky trains the volunteers, and runs coffee mornings and a tea party where group members can meet each other, share successful strategies and generally receive a 'thank you' for their commitment. Becky is a full-time buddy, reading with fourteen children each day. The buddy group can have from 20 -34 members at any one time, some coming once a week for an hour, while others attend several sessions each week for longer periods.

Identification

Progress data indicate which children may benefit from the scheme, with pupils in years 1-3 being identified at the key review points throughout the year. At the end of the summer, some 20 YR pupils were recognised as in need of a reading 'boost'; some volunteers were subsequently trained to develop early reading skills, and of those 20, only five now need a reading buddy. The length of time each pupil has a buddy for is dependent on progress; Becky works with one child who had Reading Recovery but continues to need support in order to avoid regression.

What's in a session?

Each individual session begins with an activity such as flashcard reading, word matching or word construction with magnetic letters. Any words that a child finds tricky are targeted in this first slot to give some additional practice. Next, in the tradition of BRP (formerly Better Reading Partners), the child reads the book they were introduced to at the end of the previous session. They then do some focused work around particular words or sentences in the book, and finally have a first read of the book they will meet next time. A display of prompts is on the wall, providing a quick reminder of the variety of questions and statements adults can use to encourage children's independence and problem-solving strategies. If the standard routine does not meet all the needs of a particular pupil, the session can be personalised to target key areas of difficulty. Children love coming to read, and have been known to become upset if, for some reason, they have to miss their slot!

Recording gains

Each pupil has a box file containing books and running records, indicating their Reading Recovery level. Becky checks these records diligently to ensure that everyone is making progress. However, she finds that the buddies are quick to mention concerns, meaning that advice can be given immediately to address any stumbling blocks or barriers. As mentioned above, the school data confirm the progress made through the intervention.

Future plans

Becky is now planning to initiate a lunch time reading club. In the past, some Y5 and Y6 pupils received some training on hearing reading and volunteered to give up a lunch break once a week to work with younger pupils. They soon started to devise their own activities, including making books with their paired children to share with the rest of the class.

What else helps?

As well as training volunteers, supporting children and monitoring progress, Becky finds that regular communication with the buddies helps to sustain commitment. Becky keeps abreast of the timing of any school events which mean that some children's sessions need to be postponed, for example, class trips, assemblies or changes in the school routine; she then emails any affected buddies to let them know. This, along with ensuring that resources and advice are always available, means that buddies feel supported and valued. And the proof of the pudding as they say, is in the progress and children's pleasure in reading.
Thanks to Air Balloon Primary for sharing their excellent practice.

Dyslexia Awareness at St Mary Redcliffe Secondary

Hannah Scott-Mullen, KS3 and literacy SENCO, shares her school's experience of promoting dyslexia awareness

During the autumn we ran a 6-week series of creative arts group sessions with students with specific learning difficulty (SpLD) from across all year groups. The idea behind this was to give students time out during a lesson once a week to explore their creative responses to their identities as dyslexic learners, and also to give them a chance to chat and share their feelings with one another about their experiences of being dyslexic.

The theme for the creative art work set by the British Dyslexia Association was 'Dyslexia Matters' and students worked on producing either a visual arts response or an 'invention' to this theme. The work created was really varied, ranging from a Year 7 student who invented the idea of a robotic dog called 'Dys-Dog' that was designed to enable non-dyslexic students a chance to experience the virtual worlds of a dyslexic person, simply by programming the app on the dys-dog phone and wearing the special sunglasses, to a piece of textile art that expressed the 'coat' or 'clothing' that dyslexic and non-dyslexic learners wear in their lives.


Three students in our school were commended by our headteacher for their creative work (Josie Davis, Grace Cox and Sebastian Goodchild). In the national competition, three of our students received certificates from the British Dyslexia Association: Sebastian Goodchild (Year 7) who was winner in the 11 years and under category of inventions for the invention of a 'Dyslexia Printer' which would be a printer that could print thoughts straight from your head on to paper; Mhairi Lochead (Year 8), runner up in the 11-18 years category for a visual arts piece called 'My Dyslexic

Brain'; and a commendation for Grace Cox, Year 7, for her dys-dog invention. Mhairi said of her experience: 'Doing the dyslexia awareness group made feel confident because I was with other people who had dyslexia and they knew how I was feeling', whilst Josie Davis (Year 8) said 'Being a part of the Dyslexia Awareness Group has made me understand more about dyslexia and how it is different for different people'. We also made a film during the week called 'Dyslexia Matters at SMRT' where students and staff talked about how and why dyslexia mattered for them. This was used during the weekly worship by tutors in their tutor time, and accompanied by a prayer about the celebration of difference. Finally, we had a day where students with dyslexia handed out 'Top-tip' cupcakes to staff – a bit like fortune cookies - containing top tips about how to support students with dyslexia. We were also really chuffed as a school to be given a signed copy of 'The Story Machine' by Tom McLaughlin to recognise our efforts with Dyslexia Awareness Week. It's a fabulous story which really reveals the creative potential in seeing things from different, dyslexic perspectives!
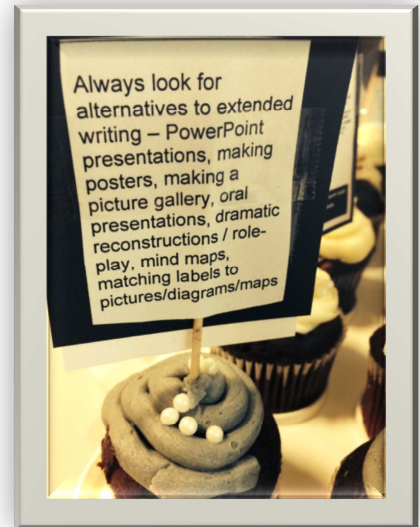
Thanks to staff and students for sharing their exciting and creative efforts!
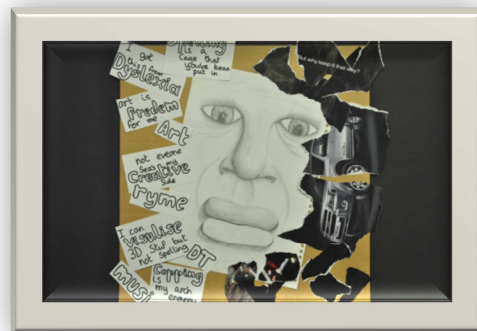
A Christmas wish for all you SENCOs...

The SENCOs of Bristol, a hardworking crew,
Busy assessing for plan-do-review,
Be sure to partake of both vittles and cheer,
To sustain you for all your endeavours next year!

Happy holidays!