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# Cognition and learning - assess, plan and strategies

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**CTRL + P on your keyboard (Command + P on a Mac)**

You have an option to print the entire page, or select a page range.

## First concerns - Stage one

### Assess

Observed emerging and/or fluctuating difficulties with the following:

- Low general attainment and progress and/or gap beginning to widen
- Difficulty in understanding abstract concepts and applying prior learning
- Difficulty following instructions
- Speech and language difficulties
- Attention and concentration span difficulties e.g. easily distracted or short attention span
- Literacy difficulties, e.g. reluctance to read, difficulty reading, poor comprehension, writing difficulties
- Numeracy difficulties
- Untidy handwriting
- Poor organisation
- Discrepancy between oral and written work
- Tiredness due to excessive concentration levels
- Social and behavioural difficulties arising from low self-esteem and frustration

### Plan

Class teacher liaises with parents/carers and child/young person on a regular basis – minimum of 3 meetings within a 12-month period.

- Check to see if all vision checks are up to date
- Check to see if all hearing checks are up to date
- Obtain and record updated parents/carers views
- Obtain and record updated child or young person’s views

If necessary:

- Examine previous assessment information, this may mean looking at early years foundation stage (EYFS) data and/or previous school records
- Consider past teacher observations and views
- Collate current assessments related to area of concern
- Observe and compare potential barriers to learning and participation

## Strategies

Continue with any relevant strategies from the initial observation stage, plus:

- Give clear and simple instructions
- Consider where children and young people are seated within the learning environment to enable them to see visual prompts etc
- Have clearly differentiated success criteria
- Explain, model or scaffold task where necessary, check for understanding
- Allow extra time for processing information (10 second rule), formulating a response and completing tasks
- Allow for frequent retrieval practice through recall and repetition
- Use a variety of strategies for effective communication, including visual support and/or encouraging the child or young person to say in a different way or show what they mean
- Specific activities are differentiated appropriately, eg words for spelling practice, times tables practice, methods of recording. There are opportunities for practical and interactive, as well as paper and pencil tasks
- Plan a range of activities taking account of different learning strengths, and practical activities offered where possible, eg. learning from pictures, diagrams, mind-maps, using practical equipment, handling objects, moving and doing rather than sitting
- Present new information in small chunks, using simple language that is relevant to the child or young person
- Link new learning to what pupil already knows, for example, start a lesson with a class mind-map of what they already know about a subject
- Give pupils 'thinking time' or opportunities to work with talk partners before answering a questions, or say "I'm going to come back to you in a minute for your idea"
- Recap relevant vocabulary. Pre-teach vocabulary before introducing a new topic
- Staff provide writing frames and templates

## First concerns - Stage two

### Assess

Observed ongoing and/or fluctuating difficulties with the following:

- Low general attainment and progress and/or gap beginning to widen
- Difficulty in understanding abstract concepts and applying prior learning
- Speech and language difficulties
- Attention and concentration span difficulties e.g. easily distracted or short attention span
- Literacy difficulties, e.g. reluctance to read, difficulty reading, poor comprehension, writing difficulties.
- Numeracy difficulties
- Untidy handwriting/clumsy
- Poor organisation
- Discrepancy between oral and written work
- Difficulty following instructions
- Tiredness due to excessive concentration levels
- Social and behavioural difficulties arising from low self-esteem and frustration

### Plan

Class teacher liaises with parents/carers and child/young person on a regular basis – minimum of 3 meetings within a 12-month period.

At this time:

- Obtain and record updated parents/carers views
- Obtain and record updated child or young person's views
- Share and discuss observations, assessment information and barriers to learning gathered and identified at first concerns stage one
- Begin to narrow down through assessments if the child/young person has difficulties across the board or in specific subjects, look for patterns of engagement, concentration and performance throughout the school day

If available and/or appropriate:

- Carry out further assessments as necessary for the area of concern such as spelling age, reading age tests and phonics

assessments. Identify gaps in learning from class assessments, the Blackpool educational psychology service have created English and Maths checklists, all Blackpool school SENCo's have access to these

- Consider any relevant health records that have been shared/provided (e.g. school nurse, speech and language therapist)
- Explore some of the assessments from the communication and interaction [first concerns stage one](#)

## Strategies

Class teacher to discuss findings with the SENCO and plan for in class interventions

Continue to use the strategies suggested in the initial observation and first concerns stage one of this toolkit plus:

- Identify gaps in learning and provide focused teaching, use these to provide and create SMART and achievable targets
- Provide appropriate small group interventions and resources specific to targets
- Have clearly differentiated learning objectives and success criteria
- Present new information in small chunks keeping language simple and where appropriate use [visual supports](#) such as task plans to help child or young person stay on track
- Provide opportunities for alternative methods for recording e.g. mind mapping, scaffolding, close procedure, writing frames
- Introduce new material in a multi-sensory way – show it, listen to it, look at it, hear it, say it, write it [multi-sensory teaching strategies](#) e.g. using colour to highlight letter patterns in word families
- Specific [differentiation of activities and materials](#) e.g. readability, practical learning experiences

## SEN support - stage one

### Assess

Observed persistent and moderate difficulties with the following:

- Accessing the curriculum
- With interpersonal skills, presenting as socially or emotionally immature
- Attention and concentration span difficulties, leading to poor motivation and resistance to learning
- Sequencing, visual and/or auditory perception
- Motor skills, co-ordination and organisation
- Retaining information from earlier in the day or the previous lesson
- Acquisition of reading, writing, oral or number skills, which do not fit the child/young persons general pattern of learning and performance

### Plan

SENCo, class teacher, parents/carers and child/young person continue to liaise on a regular basis with the SENCo taking the lead having a minimum of 3 meetings within a 12-month period

At this time:

- Obtain and record updated parents/carers views
- Obtain and record updated child or young person's views
- Review strategies used at first concerns stages
- Place child/young person on register as SEN Support (Code K)
- Complete an SEN support plan and follow the assess, plan do review approach reviewing on a regular basis (e.g. at least termly)
- Implement strategies (including targeted support and/or resources) up to agreed financial levels: plus up to a maximum of £6,000
- Ensure all staff involved in teaching and supporting the child/young person are aware of their learning needs and support required
- Ensure class teacher and teaching assistants receive relevant continuing professional development (CPD) - refer to the resources section for training modules on developing reading

## Strategies

Continue with any relevant strategies from first concerns stages, plus:

- Keep all distractions to a minimum
- Continue to encourage the use of spelling and reading strategies
- Provide visual and practical resources to present key information
- Encourage peer support and partner work where possible
- Ensure that targets are SMART and achievable
- Use a variety of strategies for recording
- Pre-teaching new skills and concepts before some lessons

- Provide regular, specific focused teaching which is increasingly individualised from teacher or teaching assistant
- Try a range of coloured overlays and/or reading rulers
- Use checklists and task plans to structure classroom/homework tasks

At this stage:

- Plan targeted interventions
- Ensure interventions are delivered by trained teaching staff
- Class teacher and intervention staff are to monitor and review interventions on a regular basis to ensure accelerated progress

## SEN support - Stage two

### Assess

Observed persistent and moderate difficulties with the following:

- The gap between the child or young person and that of his/her peers may be significantly wider than would be expected for children or young people of his/her age
- May also be socially or emotionally immature and have limited interpersonal skills
- Attention and concentration span difficulties, leading to poor motivation and resistance to learning
- Difficulties with sequencing, visual and/or auditory perception, coordination, or short term working memory
- Difficulties in the acquisition of reading, writing, oral or number skills, which do not fit his/her general pattern of learning and performance
- Difficulties with other areas, e.g. motor skills, organisation skills, behaviour, social or emotional skills and multi-agency advice may be required
- Very specific difficulties affecting literacy skills, spatial and perceptual skills and fine and gross motor skill

### Plan

SENCO, class teacher, parents/carers, child/young person and any external professionals involved liaise on a regular basis – minimum of 3 meetings within a 12-month period.

At this time, continue to:

- Obtain and record updated parents/carers views
- Obtain and record updated child or young person's views
- Complete a SEN support plan and follow the assess, plan do review approach reviewing on a regular basis (e.g. at least termly)
- Check child/young person is on register as SEN support

If necessary:

- Seek external advice (with parental consent) from Inclusion link teacher or refer in to inclusion team for advisory teacher support. If appropriate, discuss at educational psychologist (EP) clusters or refer to EP service.
- Continue to implement strategies (including targeted support and/or resources) up to agreed financial levels: plus up to a maximum of £6,000

### Strategies

Continue with any relevant strategies from first concerns levels and SEN support stage one, plus:

- Continue to provide appropriate small group interventions and resources specific to need with measurable SMART targets
- Ensure pre and post assessments are completed for each intervention
- Implement, monitor and review advice from external agencies

If available and appropriate:

- Additional adult group support during lessons
- Provide targeted, evidence based 1:1 interventions

## Complex

### Assess

Observed persistent and significant difficulties with the following:

- Will have low attainment reflected in levels, typical of two thirds of chronological age with the gap possibly continuing to widen

- Difficulties in the acquisition of reading, writing, oral or number skills, which require high levels of tailored support
- Inability to concentrate even with targeted support or resources leading to poor motivation and resistance to learning
- Frustration in inability to access learning leading to complete disengagement with learning or problematic behaviours which are unmanageable in a mainstream setting even with high levels of support and tailored, individual and skilled interventions
- Limited social, emotional and interpersonal skills, requiring high level of tailored support
- Complex difficulties with sequencing, visual and/or auditory perception, coordination, organisation, concentration or short term working memory

## Plan

Class teacher, SENCO, parents/carers and child/young person and any external professionals continue to liaise on a regular basis – minimum of 3 meetings within a 12-month period

- Obtain and record updated parents/carers views and child or young person's views

If EHC plan is not in place:

- Review SEN support plan (at least termly)
- Consider a request for EHC needs assessment

If EHC plan is in place:

- Change code on SEN register to indicate child/young person has EHC plan in place (code E)
- Refer to described outcomes and provision and implement - the class teacher, SENCo and assistant working with the child should have regular sight of the EHC plan
- Continue to plan, do, review against the specified outcomes in EHC plan – the targets on assess plan do review will be broken down into smaller targets as the EHC plan outcomes are usually end of key stage
- Complete annual review of EHC plan – [The annual review process | \(IPSEA\) Independent provider of special education advice](#)
- Continue to act on external advice from educational and health agencies as necessary, including speech and language therapy (SALT) care plan
- Implement strategies (including provision of targeted support and/or resources) up to agreed financial levels: plus up to £6,000 and any additional top-up as agreed based on the provision detailed in the EHC plan
- Ensure class teacher and teaching assistants receive relevant continuing professional development (CPD)

## Strategies

Continue with any relevant strategies from first concerns and/or SEN Support levels, plus:

- Continue to identify gaps in learning
- See EHCP for specific outcomes and break outcomes into smaller, SMART targets and review frequently
- Create a personalised curriculum tailored to the child or young person's needs (this may require consultation with all professionals involved with the child or young person)
- Incorporate external advice
- Liaise with support to ensure learning outcomes are facilitated and resources are readily available
- Put behaviour management programme in place, if appropriate
- Advisory teacher to support with staff CPD and curriculum.

## Specialist

### Assess

- Won't meet age related expectations in all areas of learning throughout their education and not expected to exceed P-levels or National Curriculum level 1 by Year 11 in mainstream education and/or needing access to alternative accreditation and/or lower level GCSEs

### Plan

Class teacher, SENCO, parents/carers, child/young person and external professionals continue to liaise on a regular basis – minimum of 3 meetings within a 12-month period

- Obtain and record updated parents' views and child or young person's views

Continue to:





- Refer to described outcomes and provision and implement - the class teacher, SENCo and assistant working with the child should have regular sight of the EHC plan

- Continue to plan, do, review against the specified outcomes in EHC Plan – the targets on assess plan do review will be broken down into smaller targets as the EHC plan outcomes are usually end of key stage
- Complete annual review of EHC plan – [The annual review process | \(IPSEA\) independent provider of special education advice](#)
- Continue to act on external advice from educational and health agencies as necessary, including speech and language therapy (SALT) care plan
- Implement strategies (including provision of targeted support and/or resources) up to agreed financial levels, plus up to £6,000 and any additional top-up as agreed based on the provision detailed in the EHC plan
- Ensure class teacher and teaching assistants receive relevant continuing professional development (CPD)

## Strategies

- Individual education programmes/plans put in place
- Individualised curriculum closely tailored to identified long and short-term outcomes for the child or young person, and likely involving pre- subject based learning and functional life skills training
- High ratio of staff to child or young persons
- Specially trained teaching staff and teaching assistants
- Small class sizes (smaller than 10)
- Multi-disciplinary team interventions on or off- site
- Multi-sensory teaching
- High level of appropriate ‘catch-up’ interventions put into place to try and accelerate progress
- Assessment using a ‘small steps’ measure such B Squared/PIVATS, Blackpool SEND assessments – Reading and writing

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