Using the graduated approach

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This graduated approach was developed to support the process of meeting the individual needs of all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

The graduated approach provides:

- An outline of the provision and support that Blackpool Council expects to be in place in all educational settings which support Blackpool children and young people with SEN and therefore forms an important part of the Blackpool local offer for SEND
- Detailed guidance on how educational settings can identify children and young people with different types and levels of need, along with information on appropriate steps and strategies to support them
- Clear information about when a request for an education, health and care needs assessment, or specialist services, may be required
- Suggestions that should be considered in the context of each setting and adapted as appropriate. They are designed to encourage questioning and to support the gathering of evidence and evaluating how a setting is providing for a child's or young person's needs

The pages are not a checklist of provision but should be used to improve learning and teaching for all children and young people and enhance SEN provision at whole school, class, group and individual level.

Who should be involved at each stage?

- Initial observations - Class teacher, support staff
- First concerns 1 - Class teacher, support staff, parents/carers, child or young person
- First concerns 2 - Class teacher, support staff, parents/carers, child or young person
- SEN support 1 - SENCo, class teacher, support staff, parents/carers, child or young person (possible school nursing team)
- SEN support 2 - SENCo, class teacher, support staff, parents/carers, child or young person, external professionals
- Complex - SENCo, class teacher, support staff, parents/carers, child or young person, external professionals

Whole school ethos

Creating a positive and supportive school ethos is a key element of a whole school approach to inclusion and thereby ensuring a positive approach to both pupil and staff mental health and well being.

It is critical to the way staff feel about what they do and how they interact with each other and their pupils. It is also vital for children – to give them a sense of safety and belonging as well as the tools they need to develop and thrive.

The whole school should have common goals and ethos. This can often be felt when you enter the school.

Whole school ethos audit

Do you feel your school has a good whole school ethos and promotes inclusion?

Look at the following statements and consider how they apply to your school

- Is safe, respectful, welcoming non-judgmental and secure
- Recognises, promotes and celebrates diversity and values everyone equally

- Promotes and supports mental health and wellbeing through strategy, policies and procedures which are implanted effectively
- Has active pupil, staff and parent/carer involvements in whole school governance and decision making
- Has a curriculum, together with day-to-day interactions, that reflect and build a strong social and emotional skill set as well as knowledge
- Has effective layers of early intervention support such as counselling, peer support and nurture groups
- Has a strategy for developing a sense of school belonging in pupils, parents and carers, supporting families to support pupil's wellbeing; and making sure staff build positive and warm relationships
- Works with local partners to help families reduce family-based risk factors
- Identifies and supports pupils who need extra help as early as possible
- Supports the professional development of all school staff to develop awareness of Special Educational Needs and Disability and the inclusion of these pupils
- Promotes respectful communication between everyone
- Encourages and values open dialogue, participation and contribution by all

Role of head teacher

- The head teacher will drive the ethos of the school and will be vital to the success of a whole school approach to inclusion
- They will have a key role to play – inspiring, championing and leading the school in a way that promotes inclusion of everyone
- It will be important for the head teacher to:
    - Motivate and encourage the SLT and the whole school to take ownership of the promotion of inclusion
    - Make sure that school wellbeing is a topic that everyone feels comfortable addressing, especially when staff and pupils are under pressure
    - Foster open and trusting relationships and a sense of belongingness to create a warm, supportive and responsive school climate and ethos (e.g. through head teacher open door policies, through school gate meet and greets, noticing and celebrating staff and pupil successes)
    - Evaluating how effectively the school supports induction, ongoing training and development of staff around child wellbeing so that all staff feel equipped to contribute and build a culture of reflective practice and continuous improvement

Involving parents and carers

If a schools want to develop a whole school approach to inclusion, engaging with all members of the school community is essential and should be a key part of a school's mission and values.

This engagement should include parents and carers, building important links between home and school. Empowering them to voice their ideas and opinions and communicating effectively with them to promote their child's learning and educational experience.

Parent/carer engagement is important because working together has been shown to have a providing impact on the wellbeing, attendance, behaviour, sense of school belonging, intellectual development and attainment of pupils across a range of social and economic backgrounds.

What schools can do:

- Directly involve parents and carers in their child's academic learning
- Help strengthen parent/carers' abilities to build resilience in their children and in themselves
- Be welcoming to parents and carers who come into school; communicating with them in a non-judgmental and positive way
- Having an open door policy for school leaders and making sure it is communicated to parents/carers

Useful documents

SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years

Working together to safeguard children (2018)

Keeping children safe in education (2021)

Equality Act 2010: advice for schools

Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school

Blackpool Better Start

Blackpool's communication offer for professionals

Blackpool classrooms that communicate

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