

Workstream 1B.1

**Pupils with a hearing impairment who do not make the expected progress
Recommendations to improve outcomes**

Findings from structured interviews and discussions
with teachers of the deaf, head teachers,
and heads of support services

Author: *National Deaf Children's Society*

Date: *20 February 2016*

Version: *vP1*

Status: *For publication*

Preface



This report was prepared using funding provided by the Department for Education under grant agreement with NatSIP, the National Sensory Impairment Partnership:



Contact:

Lindsey Jane Rousseau, NatSIP Facilitator

T: 07711 030711

E: lindsey.rousseau@natsip.org.uk

W: www.natsip.org.uk

Copyright © NatSIP 2016



This document is copyright © NatSIP 2016, and is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. For more details please see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

You are free to share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format, adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially, under the following terms:

Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

Share Alike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.

No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	4
2.	Summary	4
2.1	Views on children most at risk of not making progress.....	4
2.2	Views on why these children are underachieving	4
2.3	Views on factors that contribute to improving progress.....	5
3.	Recommendations	6
4.	Background	8
5.	Findings	8
5.1	Identifying deaf children who are underachieving	8
5.2	Who are these underachievers and what are their characteristics?.....	10
5.3	Why are they not achieving?	11
6.	Successful strategies to reduce the attainment gap	13
7.	How do you demonstrate the impact of strategies used?	17
8.	What resources would be helpful to support these children?	18
8.1	Resources for teachers of the deaf.....	18
8.2	Resources for schools and mainstream teachers	18
8.3	Resources for parents:.....	18
9.	Pupil premium funding	19
10.	Conclusion.....	19

1. Introduction

It is often reported that, from a given starting point, a higher proportion of deaf children fail to make expected progress between key stages than hearing children. This is confirmed in different data collected from schools by the Department for Education (DfE). It is important that the reasons for this underachievement are explored and addressed, particularly given the current emphasis on raising the attainment of all pupils, ensuring that more disadvantaged pupils reach the thresholds that are crucial for future success, and narrowing the attainment gap between them and their peers.

This report investigates the underachievement in the education of deaf children who do not make expected progress and seeks to identify how we can improve the tracking of progress by deaf children in order to secure improved outcomes. It does this by exploring the views and perspectives of teachers of the deaf, heads of schools for deaf children, and heads of educational services. The majority of our respondents were focused on those children who are in school, as this is where teachers and heads of schools and services are likely to identify these children.

2. Summary

2.1 Views on children most at risk of not making progress

Most services were not able to identify with any degree of certainty which children were not making expected progress, and gave views based on their professional judgment and experience.

Other services felt more confident that they were able to do this. Based on this, and the professional judgment of other respondents, it was felt that the children most likely to be at risk of not making expected progress from a known starting point were those:

- from homes where there was limited exposure to language and limited life experiences
- later diagnosed and later fitted with hearing technology
- who had experienced poor or inconsistent use of amplification, hearing aids or cochlear implants
- new to the UK who had not benefited from early identification and/or hearing technology
- from homes where English is spoken as an additional language
- with additional needs which may not be identified or supported
- with a mild/moderate loss who were not known to the service

2.2 Views on why these children are underachieving

When asked about the barriers and factors that contribute to the lack of progress being identified, views included:

- Limited information on progress: Many of the services participating did not have a systematic approach to obtaining information on the progress of deaf children, and holding information on individual deaf children who are not making expected progress, particularly where the child was not directly receiving support from the service (such as children with a mild hearing loss). The challenges in identifying the pupils meant that it was not always possible to use measures to support progress that have proven to be successful with pupils with SEND, such as undertaking assessments that are reliable, valid, continuous and acted upon.
- Varying practice in schools and relationship with schools: Some services reported difficulties in getting information from some schools on pupil progress. They also reported significant differences in the capacity of schools to support deaf pupils on their roll, and variation in the extent to which schools were prepared or able to engage with the teacher of the deaf.

- Resources: Many services reported that they were not able to support children with a mild/moderate hearing loss, so identifying those who were falling behind could sometimes be problematic.
- Family circumstances: For example, limited or inconsistent support from parents in ensuring the child is wearing any hearing technology, as well as reluctance by young children (especially teenagers) to use their hearing technology.
- Quality of listening conditions in schools or other education settings.

A number of support services felt that the removal of the national curriculum levels system for grading children¹ and the fact that different schools are now using different approaches presented greater challenges than previously in identifying those pupils not making expected progress.

2.3 Views on factors that contribute to improving progress

The factors and actions that interviewees believed made the biggest contribution to improving progress were:

- Ensuring there was ongoing monitoring of the progress deaf children are making to
 - i) identify those not making progress, and
 - ii) evaluate the impact of support strategies and interventions
- Making use of relevant specialist assessments to identify particular difficulties that impede progress to inform interventions and teaching and learning strategies
- Effective engagement with mainstream teachers and teaching assistants to ensure the implementation of support strategies to improve progress
- Good relationships with senior management to facilitate effective practice and targeted support to pupils most at risk of not making progress

Suggested strategies for supporting individual pupils included:

- Involving pupils in identifying barriers to teaching and learning and their progress, what works well and what does not and what support would be most helpful
- Classroom observation to see how well the pupil is learning and identify what changes could be made to help
- Time-limited intensive structured input from well-trained staff to achieve learning targets based on a sound assessment, either individually or in a small group, depending on the pupil's needs
- Differentiation of the curriculum based on a good assessment of the pupil's needs

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/commission-on-assessment-without-levels-final-report>

3. Recommendations

Given that most services were not able to identify with any degree of certainty which children were failing to make expected progress, many of the below recommendations seek to address this.

To ensure that services are better able to identify those not making expected progress:

1. Guidance should be provided on effective approaches to collecting information on the progress of all deaf children and young people in their area drawing on the successful practice in some local authorities. This guidance will need to reflect the implications of the recommendations of the Commission into Assessment Without Levels
2. The arrangements for sharing information on the progress of deaf pupils should be reflected in:
 - the service level agreement (SLA) between the support services and schools
 - the school's assessment policy²
3. NDCS's model SLA for the provision of support services should be amended to set out the respective roles and responsibilities of schools and the service on support for assessment and sharing of information.

Training and knowledge of teachers of the deaf and mainstream teachers:

4. The Commission into Assessment Without Levels has recommended more continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers on assessment. Organisations such as NatSIP, BATOD, NDCS and the Ear Foundation should ensure this is included in the CPD offered to teachers of the deaf. Drawing on the commission's recommendations this should include:
 - The overall approach to assessment outlined in the Commission's report
 - An understanding of the concept of 'mastery'³ in assessment systems and the role of the teacher of the deaf in supporting class teachers
 - The use of formative assessment to understand pupil progress and identify areas where pupils are struggling to provide support and extension where necessary and the role of the teacher of the deaf in supporting class teachers
 - The development of in-school summative assessments (including SEN reviews), how the assessments can be used to identify those at risk of not making progress and the role of the teacher of the deaf in helping class teachers evaluate pupil learning at the end of an instruction period and the impact of their teaching.
5. Teachers of the deaf should ensure that deaf children are assessed using assessments normed on and used for their hearing peers and be expected to make comparative progress.

² 'In drafting a (assessment) policy, schools may want to ask themselves: Which data will we collect and what is unnecessary to collect? How will we use the assessment information we have collected? With whom should it be shared? How should it best be communicated to ensure it achieves its purpose?'

Final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels (September 2015)

³ 'Mastery learning' is a specific approach in which learning is broken down into discrete units and presented in logical order. Pupils are required to demonstrate mastery of the learning from each unit before being allowed to move on to the next, with the assumption that all pupils will achieve this level of mastery if they are appropriately supported. Some may take longer and need more help, but all will get there in the end.'

Commission on Assessment without levels

6. In addition, organisations such as NDCS, NatSIP and The Ear Foundation should consider the development of further training and resources to support teachers of the deaf in:
 - delivering focused interventions and evaluating their impact
 - understanding the impact of mild/moderate hearing loss
 - working effectively and assertively with schools and mainstream schools
7. Training providers should review the training offered for teachers of the deaf, particularly for their Continuing Professional Development, in light of the above training needs.
8. Organisations such as NDCS, NatSIP and The Ear Foundation should also consider developing further resources to train mainstream staff on:
 - the impact of late diagnosis/fitting of hearing aids on deaf children and successful strategies for improving the progress they make
 - challenges faced by deaf children who speak English as an additional language and successful strategies for improving the progress they make at school
9. Teachers of the deaf should ensure they highlight the importance of consistent amplification and use of hearing technology, encouraging audiologists to make available information obtained through 'datalogging' (available on some technologies to 'log' how much, where and how hearing aids and cochlear implants are used). Organisations such as NDCS, NatSIP and The Ear Foundation should also consider further resources for parents and teenagers on the importance of consistent amplification and the use of hearing technology.

4. Background

This report explores the experiences and views of teachers of the deaf, including heads of services and schools, of the group of deaf children who do not make the recommended progress educationally.

Where we refer to underachievement in this report, we mean that expected progress has not been made or expected attainments from a known starting point been reached.

Some deaf children may have made good progress from a known starting point even if they have not reached the same attainment as other deaf or hearing children.

Other deaf children do not make the same rate of progress from a known starting point as other children, or do not attain the same attainment as other deaf or hearing children. These are the children who are the focus of this report.

To inform this report, the following questions were explored:

- Who are these children and what are their characteristics and needs?
- How are they identified?
- Why are they not making the same progress as other children?
- Where are the examples of good practice and successful strategies?
- What advice can we give on effective teaching and learning strategies for these groups of children?
- What resources might be helpful?

These issues were explored through an online questionnaire, followed by focus groups and one-one interviews of heads of services and schools. An online questionnaire was distributed for teachers of the deaf and for heads of services. 14 responses were received. Several were responses from a whole service where a number of teachers of the deaf had contributed to the overall return.

The second part of the research consisted of more in-depth questions to explore the issues in more detail. Focus groups were held with two regional heads of educational services groups at which there were a total of twenty one heads of services present. Further in-depth interviews, were held with seven different heads of services and three heads of schools for deaf children to consider the issues raised. In total, thirty-one heads of services/special schools participated.

5. Findings

5.1 Identifying deaf children who are underachieving

We asked the regional groups and heads of services and schools in the face to face interviews if they knew how many of their deaf children and young people were not making expected progress.

The majority do not have this information. Twelve responded that they knew these young people, and nineteen considered they did not. When asked to estimate the percentage of their children not making the expected progress, the majority considered that more than 25% were not making expected progress.

The responses from heads of services were very different from heads of special schools for deaf children. Heads of schools have easier access to data, smaller cohorts of children and more direct influence on practice. Obtaining data in a school for the deaf is straightforward, but this is not necessarily the case in a service and many services highlighted access to data systems and data collection as a specific concern. Some services have their own databases and record progress, some use school systems and others use local authority databases where it can be difficult to access information easily. This presents particular challenges for teachers of the deaf who work in many different schools. This means that heads of services also have to be proactive and assertive in acquiring this data, raising concerns with their directors of children's services as needed.

Heads of services considered that they had more robust information about certain groups of children such as those with a profound loss, as these deaf children are seen regularly by a teacher of the deaf. Data on children with a mild or moderate hearing loss is not easily accessible, as they are less likely to be seen by the educational service, and therefore not easily identified.

This is a diverse population, they are not a group, there are different factors which interplay.

Heads of Service

There seemed little consistency in the responses as to how these children were identified and monitored. That said, respondents described a range of methods by which they would seek to identify these children.

These included:

- Using baseline assessment data, attainment and achievement data and national curriculum levels. This might be supplemented by informal and observational assessments to include knowledge of family circumstances, audiological history and effects of other SEN.
- Regular meetings between teachers of the deaf and school staff helped identify children who were not making expected progress. Some reported pupil progress monitoring meetings where targets were set with class teacher, senior leader and parents, a rating used, and interventions introduced to meet individual needs.
- Referrals from other professionals who had identified additional needs in a child might highlight lack of progress and hence identify children as underachieving.
- Some services held a database. Some used a local authority database. Where services did not have their own database, accessing data was often a challenge and made it difficult for them to track individual children.
- Benchmarking was seen as another useful tool, and most services indicated that they contributed to the NatSIP outcomes data collection. The NatSIP outcomes benchmarking project sets out to establish reliable national benchmarking data to help sensory support services to evidence their impact on children and young people with sensory impairment and inform development needs. The outcomes benchmarking exercise is carried out on an annual basis. It was considered that the collection of this data had helped in accessing data not previously available and hence aided identification.
- One service had to submit regular performance data to the borough for every child. This made it easier to highlight children who might otherwise have been missed.
- Annual progress reports were also seen as helpful. These were said to include information on the use of hearing aids, whether English was spoken as an additional language, social and emotional support, assessments (including the early years monitoring protocol or language and reading assessments) and so could be helpful in identifying deaf children at risk of underachieving.

Concerns were expressed over the removal of the national curriculum levels and changes in how different schools will measure and monitor progress in future, and ongoing uncertainty about curriculum changes. It was considered that these changes will make it harder for some services and schools to identify if deaf children are underachieving on a consistent basis.

Services considered that important factors in any lack of progress may not actually be measured at present, and that should be. These include social and emotional development, and learning style. Whilst there are assessments available for social and emotional development, carrying out in-depth assessments in these areas may require the skills of an experienced educational psychologist.

When asked what assessments were used to identify what might be impeding progress, teachers' responses were in the broad categories as below:

- Functional listening tests such as BKB (Bamford-Kowal-Bench sentence lists), PEACH (Parent Evaluation of the Aural/oral performance of Children) and LIFE-UK IHP (Listening Inventories for Education UK – Individual Hearing Profile)
- National tests such as Standard Attainment Tasks or phonics assessment
- Reading assessments such as YARC (York Assessment of Reading Comprehension) or the Edinburgh Reading Test
- Non-verbal reasoning assessments
- Numeracy assessments
- Class observations, informal assessments, individual education plans
- Social/emotional profiles
- Early years measures such as the Monitoring Protocol or NEAP (Nottingham Early Assessment Package)

More information about some of the above assessments are set out in the NDCS/NatSIP resource *Assessing and monitoring the progress of deaf children and young people*⁴.

5.2 Who are these underachievers and what are their characteristics?

A variety of needs and characteristics were suggested to describe these children. The most commonly mentioned were:

- Where there was no, very **little or poor engagement with the family** in the early years and where language support within the family was poor. This includes children in families who offered limited life experiences and provided limited exposure to language with little communication between parents and the child.
- **Children with a late diagnosis** who were often perceived by respondents to be more at risk of not making expected progress and not reaching the same attainment as others at the end of each key stage.
- Where there was **poor or inconsistent use of amplification**, hearing aids or cochlear implants.
- The presence of **additional needs** and the difficulty in sometimes identifying these needs until a much later stage, particularly where they may not be immediately apparent, such as a specific language learning difficulty or dyslexia.
- **Children new to the country** who had not been diagnosed as deaf or experienced intervention or amplification prior to entry to the UK.
- **Children with English as an additional language.** One head of service commented: *“More than half of this group of children in our local authority are not making the recommended levels of progress.”*
- **Children with a mild or moderate loss.**

The point was strongly made by many that we need to highlight that children may have made outstanding progress from an early low starting point but have not reached national norms; they may be thought to underachieve but this is not the case.

⁴ Available at: <https://www.natsip.org.uk/index.php/public-documents/natsip-documents/better-assessments-including-model-ehc-plans/904-assessing-and-monitoring-of-deaf-cyp-may-2015>

For some there was still a concern that deaf children were being compared with hearing peers. One head of service asked:

What does good progress look like for a deaf child?

A teacher of the deaf, making the assumption that deaf children had a language deficit, commented:

Deaf children have a language deficit. Are we comparing with a hearing child with a language deficit?

These comments appeared to suggest rather low expectations of deaf children, an inconsistency with education policy regarding narrowing the gaps in attainment. These low expectations need to be challenged. Most respondents agreed with one head of service who said:

All schools and services can identify these children. Assessment is important as to why they are not making progress.

One of the findings of this report is that this identification and ensuring access to data needs to happen more consistently than at present.

5.3 Why are they not achieving?

These characteristics can be gathered into themes, as to whether they are to do with the child, the hearing loss and its management, or the environment. Several respondents mentioned that it can be a combination of factors and it is difficult to tease out which is the most significant in hindering progress. Various factors suggested by services are set out below.

5.3.1 Family circumstances

The abilities and capacity of parents to support their child's development was considered a key factor in their educational progress. The importance of early family interaction is well recognised by the Government and other education professionals as a factor in the progress of deaf children. Limited life experiences and limited exposure to good language models, lack of adjustment to the hearing loss and inconsistent use of amplification were highlighted as barriers to progress. It was also recognised by respondents that for many families this can be difficult: for those recently arrived in this country, for those with English as a second language and for those with other challenges in life.

The need for high expectations and for parents to be engaged with their child's early development were also considered important by respondents.

Many respondents recognised that some families have a range of challenges to deal with and some commented that the recent welfare reforms had added to their pressures, which may affect their children's educational progress. Some comments included:

You have to empathise with the contextual circumstances parents experience, they have lots of things going on in their lives.

Deafness is just one of many difficulties faced by this group of youngsters. Socio-economic factors are placing increasing pressures on many of the families we have on caseloads.

In addition, concerns were raised about hearing technology and the support from home in its use. Teenagers were a group who were particularly mentioned. Motivating teenagers to wear their audiological equipment was repeatedly raised. The availability of funding to provide additional equipment such as FM systems was also highlighted.

5.3.2 Difficulties in identifying or responding to an additional need

It was felt by some respondents that some deaf children had an additional need that was either not identified or supported. Research⁵ suggests that up to 40% of deaf children are likely to have an additional difficulty, which may affect progress. One teacher of the deaf commented:

Sometimes schools identify the hearing loss as a barrier when they shouldn't. It can be masked by an additional need which is not targeted and the hearing loss is not the main difficulty.

Specialist expertise is required to identify the additional difficulty, which may not be readily available, particularly in a mainstream school.

5.3.3 Difficulties in taking into account a child's learning style, or social and emotional development

These needs may be significant, but may not be identified or addressed when setting targets or planning support.

5.3.4 Difficulties in finding and implementing successful strategies for supporting the progress of those children who are late identified or new to England

These are children who have not had the benefits of early identification and access to hearing technologies and early support.

5.3.5 Difficulties mainstream schools experience in meeting the needs of deaf children

There was a clear difference between responses from heads of educational services and heads of schools, with heads of schools able to access data easily and to influence practice directly. With the majority of deaf children placed in mainstream schools, heads of educational services have major challenges in doing this which need to be overcome if support provided is to be effective. They are responsible for the deaf children in their care, but many reported that they felt they often have little influence on their management in mainstream schools, or on how they are supported there. Deaf children who underachieve were less easy to identify and it was more difficult to influence their support and intervention.

Low expectations by teachers (both mainstream and specialist) also emerged as an issue in a few areas.

As most deaf children are educated in mainstream settings, it was felt that it was particularly important to consider how open the mainstream school was to the delivery of training, their understanding of the needs of the deaf pupil, and the impact of the needs of the other pupils in the class. How the school deployed the teaching assistants working with the child was also a relevant factor.

Heads of service mentioned the challenges in working in mainstream schools where engagement and inclusive practice was poor, and expectations were low, and where the support given between the teacher of the deaf visits may not be consistent. It was felt, for example, that many teachers of the deaf had little control over the quality of teaching assistants used with a deaf child. Schools with a high turnover of staff and where training has to be continually repeated were also mentioned, as were education funding cuts.

⁵ Fortnum, H. Davies, A. (1997) Epidemiology of permanent childhood hearing impairment in Trent Region, 1985-1993 *British Journal of Audiology*, 1997,31,409-446

For example:

Need to protect services, because mainstream teachers cannot possibly be experts in all forms of disability.

There is a difference between a teaching service and an advisory service. Cuts will impact on changes in delivery.

Heads of Service

Practically, the environmental and acoustic features of schools and settings were considered an important factor, which needed addressing in many schools.

Finally, some services reported that deaf children with a mild or moderate hearing loss and who are underachieving would not be picked up by the service as the level of hearing loss did not meet the service eligibility thresholds.

6. Successful strategies to reduce the attainment gap

The key to successful strategies was seen to be ongoing and constant monitoring and tracking. Tracking can identify underachievement in individuals and groups, inform teaching strategies and help schools target intervention effectively and, in the era of personalised learning, detailed information on individual pupils can help ensure that they realise their potential and that no one is left behind.

Case study: Oxford SENSS (Hearing Impairment Team)

The team has a comprehensive reporting system that they use for those children who have regular teaching support from a teacher of the deaf.

A child is usually assessed in September and then reviewed three times a year, with in-between reassessments with other non-standard assessment criteria (for examples observation of behaviour). Following the initial assessment, they complete a form which highlights priority areas for intervention. The interventions are delivered across the year and can change according to needs.

Following delivery of strategies to support the intervention, an intervention log records the impact of the support. The intervention logs are used as an ongoing record to ensure that they can demonstrate the link between assessment, planning, intervention and review to inform future interventions. The service retains an individual progress sheet recording annual progress in reading, writing and maths. They also have an overview tracking sheet for specialist language and communication assessment.

With the removal of reporting with levels, the service is looking at how schools are adapting their tracking to demonstrate that a child has mastery of an area of learning, and will adapt their reporting methods accordingly.

Examples of documents in use will be available at a later date in an updated NatSIP quality improvement tool.

Services highlighted the importance of working with the school and using their tracking systems to monitor progress. One service spoke about how they used an intervention log, which was tied to the school's Individual Education Plan for the pupil, to review the impact of personalised learning programmes and to reassess, as needed.

Case study: Norfolk Virtual School Sensory Support (VSSS)

The Norfolk specialist education support service for deaf children is run as a 'virtual school'. This enables the service to take a holistic view of the children and young people across Norfolk and to enable regular monitoring of their progress (e.g. not just annually but termly) so intervention can be timely and have positive outcomes.

The VSSS has an Assessment Policy and a Tracking Pupil Progress Policy. They monitor pupil progress through:

- National curriculum data
- Use of standardised specialist assessments e.g. BPVS, Reynell
- Specialist areas such as skills ladders, eDCC, keystrokes, touch-typing Mobility and Independent Living Skills
- Input from schools/settings on their views on pupil progress
- Feedback from parent/carers
- Target setting and provision mapping

This data is put onto an Individual Pupil Data Form and reviewed through:

- Individual Meetings with VSSS staff where concerns are raised about progress and further intervention discussed
- Further assessment of need by VSSS using a battery of appropriate diagnostic assessments
- Pupil Progress meetings with lead teachers - opportunity to look at specific cases, carry out audits or further investigations if progress has not been made
- Audit of cases where appropriate to reflect on practice

Further feedback is received:

- from parent/carers of school aged children and young people
- Discussions with class teachers in settings, termly meetings and EHCP meetings
- Discussion with families in the early years e.g. around development journal/ESMP
- Voice of the Child – using an inclusion App questionnaire

If further intervention does not result in improvements in progress, the VSSS will commission further assessment e.g. an Educational Psychologist assessment.

Teachers were asked to share strategies they found useful. With regard to working with families and early intervention, teachers commented on the value of:

- working in a holistic capacity with the family, in the home, clinic and playgroup so as to be a consistent presence
- family intervention with input to parents on communication and language development
- play therapy.

With regard to the educational management of children who have been identified as not making expected progress, the majority of these children are in mainstream schools, where any under-achievement becomes more readily apparent. Effective working with schools was seen as key to successful management of these children.

Collaboration with schools is key for services, we have to work together. Use the new code of practice and ask schools, what have you done so far? How have you monitored it?

Head of Service

This collaboration needs to develop good links at a high level. For example, one Head of Service said:

The teacher of the deaf should be speaking to the head-teacher to identify the best teachers in school to support the deaf child. One person can make changes. It can mean difficult conversations.

It was suggested that it was time-effective to work across a group of schools, with a key worker or family worker responsible. Then, ongoing training could be offered across the group, encouraging the mainstream teachers to take responsibility for the deaf children and their progress.

Training should include teaching assistants. As one Head commented:

The role of the teaching assistant supporting the deaf child in the mainstream school needs to be examined, if they are unqualified and have a lack of training and expertise this may have an impact on the child's engagement in learning and lack of progress.

Ongoing training for mainstream staff and delivery of skills training for those in schools for the deaf were required. Where children had additional needs, then training on working as part of a team with other professionals was needed.

Other specific strategies mentioned included:

- Accessing pupil views, such as asking the pupil what works for them, their thoughts on support and access to the curriculum.
- Classroom observations to include those children who receive monitoring visits

Questionnaires on progress sent out before an annual visit to staff and pupil to support teacher of the deaf advice on the visit.

- Modelling strategies and support to a teaching assistant working with the child.
- Impact reports distributed to schools which are outcomes and achievement based.
- Social and emotional support groups for deaf pupils.

Case study: Longwill School deaf adult at home project

This is a six-week project where two deaf adults visit the family at home to promote British Sign Language and introduce deaf role models. Parents are identified by the home link worker or the head teacher as a family in need of this additional support. The sessions run after school hours and the child is involved in delivering to the family (includes aunts, uncles, grandparents).

The school reports positive outcomes as a result of the intervention including:

- Improved signing skills
- Family more confident in their ability to sign with their child
- More family members communicate with the deaf child and the child is less isolated
- Improved behaviour
- Parents are better able to support the child's learning within the home,
- The child makes progress in school as signing improves.

A short film about the project is available on the web.⁶

With regard to staffing, mention was made of the training presently offered to teachers to qualify as teachers of the deaf. Some heads of service felt that the training content needed to be reviewed. It was felt to be lacking in some areas and out of date, especially with reference to hearing technology.

Quality assurance of what was offered was raised as an important factor to assure good quality support. This needs further clarification as to what should be quality assured, how and by whom.

Case study: Northumberland Sensory Support Service

The service manager reports to the team and to senior management each September, delivering a presentation called 'Evidencing Service Impact.' The presentation includes information on quality processes and provision, identification and assessment.

Evidence includes analysis of NatSIP outcomes benchmarking and standardised assessment data.

A dialogue is had on those children not making the recommended levels of progress and on how service developments can improve assessment practice.

The service holds HI core assessments profiles recording individual assessment results for each child for whom direct interventions are provided.

The *NatSIP Quality Improvement Tool*⁷ includes a range of documents provided by Northumberland.

In addition, the NDCS/NatSIP resource *Assessing and monitoring the progress of deaf children and young people*⁸ has some examples of assessment in practice and of a tracking system developed for use with deaf children in a mainstream school.

Joint working with other professionals, e.g. speech and language therapy, audiology staff and social care needed to be ongoing at a managerial level to be effective.

⁶ www.longwill.bham.sch.uk/#!showcase/c2e7

⁷ www.natsip.org.uk/index.php/210-supporting-si-workforce/quality-improvement-standards/524-gilaunch

⁸ www.ndcs.org.uk/professional_support/our_resources/assessments.html

7. How do you demonstrate the impact of strategies used?

How to determine which strategy worked, particularly when working with a range of other professionals, was considered challenging.

That's difficult, where there is a lot of effective collaborative working you shouldn't be able to tease out who has made the difference and there is no control group to compare with

Some are difficult to evidence, there isn't a measure. Sometimes it is the incidental feedback we receive.

Heads of Service

A variety of tools were highlighted as ways to demonstrate the success of strategies to promote progress. These included:

- **Assessment tools** including the early monitoring protocol, tracking national levels and specialised assessments.
- **Feedback** from schools, pupils and parents and training evaluations
- **Reports** including impact reports, Individual Education Plans, personalised learning programmes (taking a highly structured and responsive approach to each child's and young person's learning) and intervention logs (to record the planning and evaluation of interventions)
- Returning to the **baseline data** and analysing the percentage of children who have met their targets
- **Reviewing** individual children's progress with line managers in order to identify those where progress is not as expected
- **Case studies** which were found to be very helpful to demonstrate impact of strategies which had enabled a child who was underachieving to be successful
- **Surveys to identify changes in school and staff confidence** including how effectively strategies are used.

Case study: Nottinghamshire County Council Sensory Team.

The team write impact reports annually for those pupils with whom they have a significant involvement with. These tend to be pupils who receive a weekly visit from a teacher of the deaf. The reports are shared with parents, schools and clinics and record the impact of interventions and the outcomes following delivery of the strategies.

A copy of an impact report can be found in the *NatSIP Quality Improvement Tool*.⁹

The service is currently developing a data collection sheet which will record the impact of service input on specific children, which will be included in an updated NatSIP quality improvement tool later in the year.

⁹ www.natsip.org.uk/index.php/210-supporting-si-workforce/quality-improvement-standards/524-gilaunch

See Standard 4, 'Notts intervention' in the RH column. (Go to Standard 4 and look for "Notts intervention" in the right hand column).

8. What resources would be helpful to support these children?

A range of suggestions were made for resources for:

- Teachers of the deaf
- Schools and mainstream teachers
- Parents

It was not always clear if respondents were suggesting that new resources should be developed or that existing resources should be amended or better disseminated.

8.1 Resources for teachers of the deaf

- Training on working with other professionals around the child
- Training on social and emotional development and in particular how to measure progress in this area
- Training on how to adapt the curriculum
- Research with speech and language therapists to investigate which interventions are helpful for specific learning difficulties
- Information on the different ways progress can be recorded and tracked
- Information on pupil's opinions about what they find helpful and what they need
- Case studies on children and young people who had been underachieving and were able to catch up – to inspire success
- Case studies on working with 'hard to reach' parents

8.2 Resources for schools and mainstream teachers

- More detailed information about specific strategies for deaf children.
- Information on the role of a Teacher of the Deaf and what specialist staff can offer mainstream schools
- An advisory sheet for staff about how to identify, monitor and support these children
- Posters and checklists, especially to support children with a mild and moderate loss and in secondary school
- Training for teaching assistants on identifying lack of progress
- Films for newly qualified teachers and training providers on supporting deaf children in mainstream schools, showing good practice
- Video of good practice for class teachers with an evaluation and accompanying checklist to check their own practice.

8.3 Resources for parents:

- Resources on supporting language development at home
- More materials in languages other than English to support families
- Films for parents, including on the extent of the hearing loss and its implications and on checking hearing aids

9. Pupil premium funding

The pupil premium is additional funding given to publicly funded schools in England to be used to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap between them and their peers. Heads of service were asked for examples where they had seen pupil premium used to support deaf children.

The majority had not seen any examples and some were not sure which children received PP and what it had been used to provide. Where it had been used, it was to fund extra-curricular activities to include the provision of transport, school trips and residential costs.

One service reported that some schools in their borough employed a speech and language therapist with the money. Separately, a school for deaf children had employed a speech and language therapist as 50% of their children did not meet the criteria for support from the local authority's speech and language therapist.

The school also used it to deliver professional development in raising the questioning skills of teachers to develop deeper thinking and questioning skills of staff and pupils.

10. Conclusion

The difference between the educational performance of some deaf children and that of their hearing peers can be large. The possible causes and contributors to underachievement are many and various, as seen from the perspective of teachers of the deaf, heads of schools for the deaf and heads of educational services.

The subject matter is challenging and an area in which education professionals would like more training and support. This is an important area for development. Teachers of the deaf need to be confident they can deliver a high quality service, keep abreast of changes in educational practice and pedagogy, keep up to date with new initiatives as well as maintaining and developing their specialist skills in their own rapidly developing area of expertise. Teachers of the deaf also need to be able to work with a range of different schools who have different systems to record and monitor progress. They need to be knowledgeable about how the school is measuring progress, offering expert support to the school to ensure the deaf child is making the expected progress. To do all of this, they need to be able to work effectively and assertively with schools.

As this report shows, collaboration between educational services for deaf children and the mainstream schools with which they work, along with better training, are key to improving the tracking of the progress that deaf children make. So that we can ultimately improve the outcomes they achieve.

We hope that the recommendations set out in this report will help to achieve this challenge, and set the scene for future work in gathering and appropriately using data to secure improved outcomes.

-- End of Document --