

Best Practice Guidance for Sensory Impairment in addition to Profound, Severe or Complex Learning Needs in Special Schools



This document has been developed to identify best practice for Special Schools in meeting the needs of pupils with sensory impairment. It outlines the expectations for classroom practice for all pupils with sensory impairments and for specialist interventions for individuals with severe or profound sensory impairments.

This document is designed to be used as a self assessment tool to evidence good practice and to identify areas for development. It can also be used as an observational tool to identify good teaching strategies and to act as a framework to shape future interventions.

Evidenced ✓	Quality First Teaching for classes and small groups	Evidenced ✓	Specialist Interventions for individual pupils or small groups
	All children and young people including those with unilateral, mild, moderate, severe and profound Sensory Impairments		Children and young people with severe or profound Sensory Impairments
	Class Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Care Staff		Class Teachers, Teaching Assistant, Care Staff, Specialist Teachers, Specialist Professionals
	The following should be identifiable within the classroom practice as shown by all staff:		The following should be evidenced to ensure the appropriate focus for specialist sensory interventions:
	Communication - Using a range of communication approaches (Total Communication Approach) in the presentation of the curriculum including the extended curriculum - Ensuring optimum conditions for pupils for the best use of vision eg appropriate positioning, good lighting, the reduction of glare - Ensuring optimum conditions for good listening eg use of sound field systems to support classroom teaching, reduction in background noise, appropriate positioning - Ensuring aids are working, clean and worn (such as glasses, hearing aids, cochlear implants) - Ensuring the pupil's attention is gained before commencing teaching activities - Supporting the provision of individual communication modes and individual learning styles used by each pupil eg sign, tactile - Supporting all augmented or alternative communication modes with clear, well-paced speech with good voice levels		Communication - Staff demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the advice provided by specialist professionals such as the Specialist Teachers for Sensory Impairment, Speech and Language Therapist and the Communication and Assistive Technology Service regarding the development of individual communication systems. - Staff working with specialist professionals to initiate programmes to support pupils with sensory impairment to develop/use appropriate communication skills eg on body signing and hand under hand signing - Specialist professionals providing training to staff and pupils regarding communication modes - Specialist professionals modelling the use of communication systems in the classroom - Staff working with specialist professionals and demonstrating their understanding of the impact of

	• Supporting communication through the use of visual, tactile and real object timetables • Fully supporting communication modes in circle time, social skills programmes and all social activities during lunch and play • Creating opportunities to develop social language in individual and group settings and including time to process and respond • Using waiting times as communication and learning opportunities • Using all routines in the classroom and for care needs to maximise interaction and develop communication • Using the Sensory Room as a focused learning environment • Demonstrating positive attitudes to the use of hearing aids, radio aids and Soundfield systems for pupils • Using a variety of outputs eg print or tactile format, voice output, direct outputs to hearing aids		severe and profound sensory impairment for pupils with profound, severe or complex learning needs • School staff fully supporting the specialist programmes and provide feedback to specialist professionals. • Using of specialist environments to aid and establish communication eg resonance boards, light boxes within the classroom, quiet rooms for good listening. • Staff working with specialist professionals to develop the use of Sensory Rooms as a learning environment for pupils for severe and profound sensory impairment • Using specialist communication aids, voice output devices, personalised communication systems and supporting those communicating via electronic methods • Actively supporting the use of radio aids in the classroom
	Access to Information • Using a range of alternative computer access devices • Using alternative formats to meet the individual access needs of pupils eg audio and tactile • Using real objects and uncluttered photos/pictures with clear contrast • Preparing classroom materials with good clarity and contrast • Using clear appropriately sized symbols or clear fonts • Providing a range of literacy resources such as sensory stories • Providing a range of auditory, visual and tactile resources to support learning objectives • Using clear images with good contrast on the interactive whiteboard • Actively ensuring good acoustics for learning • Using appropriate language levels and signing support • Supporting the use of Low Vision Aids • Regularly using low cost individual access materials • Staff using a range of teaching and learning styles in presentation of curriculum including those appropriate to deafblind pupils • Staff promoting participation and learning and ensuring that information has been correctly understood by pupils with sensory		Access to Information • Staff demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the advice provided by specialist professionals regarding appropriate formats and the preparation and presentation of curriculum materials • Providing or ensuring access to individual assessments of ICT needs, both hardware and software • Supporting learning through the use of an appropriate computer from the Assistive Technology Equipment Panel/Communication and Assistive Technology Service • Supporting the use of specialist equipment to access the internet and ensuring the interactive whiteboard is configured to provide full access • Preparing and supporting curriculum materials in individualised formats including, voice output, Braille, Moon, real object demonstration and via communication aids to ensure pupils can learn alongside peers • Providing individual specialised equipment to support pupils' access to their mode of information eg Braille • Providing specialists to support communication modes such as Intervenor, Communication Support Worker, Guide-Communicator, Note takers

	impairment • Using signed TV programmes as appropriate • Developing all movement opportunities to also be learning opportunities		
	Independence, Mobility and Resilience • Enabling pupils to be ready to learn through fostering pupil well-being and self-esteem • Providing appropriate opportunities to ensure that pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and increase their independence as a learner • Providing opportunities for pupils to express preferences, make meaningful choices and develop independence in everyday activities • Respecting the outcomes of pupil's choice making • Providing an appropriate responsive environment for pupils to develop independence • Using small group work to develop organisational skills • Encouraging independence in mobility • Encouraging the development of independence with hearing aids, glasses, radio aid systems and cochlear implants as appropriate • Planning transitions within school and visits to new schools to enable familiarity with the environment • Organising the classroom to be suitably accessible for pupils with sensory impairment with an orderly approach to both curriculum materials and personal belongings • Establishing and supporting classroom routines that enable pupils with sensory impairment to function as independently as possible within the familiar situation		Independence, Mobility and Resilience • Staff demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the mobility advice provided by Kent Association for the Blind Habilitation/Mobility officer (for those is Mobility Priority Band 1) • Specialist professionals working with pupils to support the use of long cane, symbol cane, hoople for those who have the capacity for independence in mobility, including wheelchair users. • Habilitation/Mobility officer providing training to develop skills of staff supporting pupils with sensory impairment particularly Sighted Guide Technique • Staff supporting the safe movement of pupils • Specialist professionals supporting the development of independence for pupils in familiar environments • Specialist professionals providing advice to modify life skills programmes to develop everyday social skills and maximum independence • Supporting a Life Skills programme provides the safe method for teaching independence activities eg eating, preparing food, changing for PE, navigating the dining hall, with particular reference to sensory impairment

For ease of use do not attempt to complete the totality of this document in one session. Select a section, ✓ those items that are evidenced whilst using a highlighter pen for those areas that need further development. You may realise that some items with a ✓ may on reflection require further development so highlight this as well. Highlighted items should form the basis of a discussion between school staff, the Sensory Link and the Specialist Teacher in order to focus specialist interventions and improve curriculum access in the classroom/school.

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This document has been developed to identify best practice for Special Schools in meeting the needs of pupils with sensory impairment. Underpinning practice and planning in the classroom are aspects of whole school planning which set the ethos and expectations for all pupils including those with sensory impairment.

	Whole School Planning • Policies reflect the Disability Duties under the Equality Act and the Accessibility Plan is implemented with regard to the needs of pupils with sensory impairment, including the provision of optimum learning environment eg lighting and listening conditions • Policies demonstrate and reflect access and inclusion and understand the needs of pupils with a sensory impairment. • Policies ensure an appropriate curriculum including importance of sensory input through touch, vestibular, proprioceptive and gustatory senses • Policies demonstrate and understand the needs of pupils with severe or profound sensory impairment require learning to be supported through their other senses. • School planning enables the additional curriculum and mobility training • School is a safe environment for pupils with sensory impairment • Signage has good clarity and contrast		
	Whole school planning will be evidenced in the classroom by: • Accessing additional adapted equipment e.g. modified PE equipment; wordprocessors, laptops • Accessing additional supportive software eg screen magnification, word prediction • Accessing sensory impairment equipment to provide an appropriate learning environment eg sloping desks, sound field system and good acoustic environment • Training provided to all staff regarding sensory impairment • Adapting the environment to support independent access to learning including play, voluntary activities and work experience • Using adapted signage • Accessing risk assessment training • Seeking advice from specialist professionals		Whole school planning will be evidenced at the specialist intervention by: • Providing specialist learning facilities eg quiet area • Supporting on-going individual programmes of work and specialist sensory training • Providing monitoring of individual programmes to specialist professionals • Developing and supporting personalised signage system • Attending training for sensory impairment to support and deliver an individual curriculum. Including training on: ▪ Alternative formats, tactile diagrams, objects of reference, Intervenor training, Guide-communicator training ▪ Communication through Braille, Moon, British Sign Language, Sign Supported English, Deafblind manual alphabet, On body signing ▪ Independence in life skills and mobility