

SEND Bulletin NO. 4

Planning for Inclusive Teaching

1. Appropriate teaching styles and approaches for pupils with SEMH.

No two pupils with SEMH are the same. Like any other pupils, what works with one may not necessarily work with another. The important thing is to keep trying to find the approach that works for the individual pupil. As a general rule, some of the following pointers may be helpful.

2. Active and Interactive teaching strategies

Pupils who find it hard to sit still and concentrate may need opportunities to be 'doing' rather than listening, talking or writing. Make sure that pupils are given an active role, for example: when the class is reading and discussing text on the whiteboard you might give the pupil their own copy of the text to highlight or underline.

3. Classroom organisation

If a pupil can only sit and listen for five minutes at a time, don't expect them to sit still for 20 minutes. Set a target of six minutes at first, then seven, then eight... and plan something for the pupil to move away quietly to do when they have met the target.

4. Effective use of ICT

This often helps to motivate pupils who are switched off by conventional forms of presentation and recording. Possible examples include:

- using the internet to research a topic
- predictive word-processing software and on-screen word grids to support writing
- opportunities to create presentations using software that allows pupils to explore social situations from different viewpoints.

5. Structure and predictability

Pupils experiencing emotional turbulence or anxiety may need a great deal of structure and predictability in the classroom. This is easy to understand if you reflect on your own needs. When we are upset or worried, we may not feel able to cope with work or learning that is new or demands much mental energy. We need order, calm and fairly low-key tasks, and we need to know exactly what is expected of us. For pupils with SEMH:

- display and repeat rules clearly
- firmly establish and practise classroom routines regularly, and
- give advance warning of any changes to regular events.

6. Help in learning to work independently

Many pupils with SEMH find it difficult to work independently. They may need to be taught core routines for certain tasks. They can then practise these routines, with progressively less help, until they can tell and show you what they have to do when set a certain type of task. Give them independent tasks that have been demonstrated to the whole class – eg sometimes it helps to give them more complex independent tasks towards the end of the week, when they have seen other pupils demonstrate what they have learnt in the plenary.

7. Using clear guidelines

Give very clear guidelines, for instance: 'I expect you to have produced at least four sentences by ten past ten. I will be asking you then to share them with your writing partner'.

8. Visual prompts

Use visual prompts to support the pupil's learning, for example:

- pictorial task cards
- writing frames
- word mats
- relevant classroom displays
- a card listing ideas, eg for 'Five things to do if you are stuck with your work'.

9. Focus on the positive

Pupils with SEMH are usually on the receiving end of a lot of negative comment from everyone around them. If they start to feel bad about themselves as a result, it is likely to make their behaviour worse. It can really help if adults in school make a special effort to stay positive – for example:

- using eye contact and non-verbal signals, wherever possible, to let the pupil know when their behaviour is inappropriate
- labelling the behaviour and not the pupil – eg ‘John, bullying is not allowed in our school’ instead of, ‘you big bully’
- reminding pupils of a rule when they start to misbehave, rather than telling them off – eg ‘John, the rule in this school is that we put up our hand to answer’
- using the language of choice to remind pupils when they start to misbehave that they have not made a good choice – ‘Not a great choice, Shane – better think again’
- if the pupil does not respond when reminded about a rule, giving them the choice of following the rule or accepting a sanction or consequence that is part of the classroom/school agreement – eg ‘John, the rule in this school is that we respect our own and other people’s things – you need to choose whether to keep the rule or stay behind for an extra ten minutes after school’
- when a pupil behaves badly, making a conscious effort to ‘catch them being good’ and praise them as soon as possible, to help rebuild the relationship and give the pupil a way back to behaving well.

10. Describe/model the behaviours that you want to see

Keep the language positive, for example:

- When the pupil misbehaves, saying what you want them to do, rather than what you don’t want – eg ‘John, I want you to keep your hands on the table’ instead of ‘John, stop bothering Paul’
- making a point of praising a pupil who is keeping to the rule – eg ‘Ashley, I like the way you put your hand up when you knew the answer’
- increasing the focus on the positive, by trying to ‘catch the pupil being good’ – eg ‘You stayed calm and sorted out the argument – thank you for choosing that behaviour’ or ‘You’ve concentrated on your work and got it finished – well done’
- making sure that praise describes exactly what the pupil has done – eg ‘Well done for...’ rather than ‘Good girl’.

If you have any interesting information or resources which you would like to share with your colleagues via this fortnightly bulletin please e-mail them to me. ari@st-peters.bournemouth.sch.uk

Many thanks

Anne