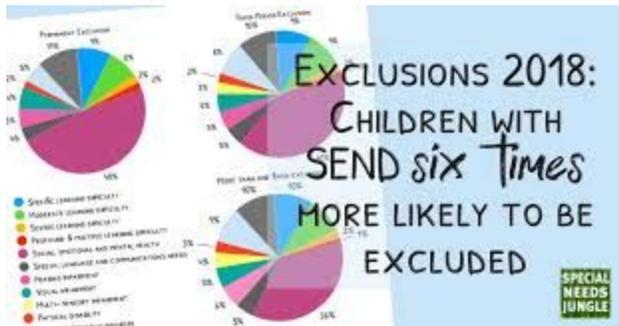# SEN Services Southwest

INSIDE LOOK

May 2019

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In The News: Exclusion of SEND Pupils By Tracey Foster

"Dozens of new schools for children with Special Educational Needs." – 11 March 2019, The Independent
"Disabled Children 'constantly' physically restrained and left bruised." – 2 March 2019, The Independent

As is often the case, the main feature of SEND in the news at the moment centres around funding! Schools are struggling to provide tailored support for individual children with the money that is available to them, resulting in a range of subsequent problems from staffing cuts to increases in the numbers of children with SEND being excluded.

The Independent reports on the Government's latest pledge to provide funding to ease the problem by paying for 37 new schools for children with SEND and two new Alternative Provision establishments nationally. Only a few Local Authorities were eligible to receive funding for a school and these schools will be Free Schools so bids can be submitted by charities, MATs and teachers. Perhaps the worry will be that many Free Schools have already been rated as Inadequate by OfSTED, including a number of Studio Schools.

Also of concern among educationalists is that the government may see this as a panacea, where in fact the need for funding is far greater than this. Paul Whiteman, of the NAHT, says, "It is of particular concern that the financial burden of additional support for pupils with more complex needs penalises those mainstream schools that are the most inclusive."

Most of us have seen a dramatic rise in the number of children with increasingly complex needs in our mainstream classrooms. We have fewer support staff and TAs trying to support the most vulnerable children in our schools with little space and few resources. As a result, the challenges we are facing are

ever more significant. The Independent has also reported on the increasing use of physical restraint on children with disabilities. Whilst the "Keeping Children Safe in Education," (Sept '18) document makes significant reference to physical restraint of pupils, there is growing pressure from unions and parents on the government to produce statutory guidelines on using physical restraint, to try to reduce the number of incidents. However the NEU has expressed concern that at the heart of the problem is the funding pressure on schools that has reduced the provision of 1:1 support. Anna Cole, from the ASCL, said, "…a key element in reducing the need for restraint intervention is the provision of tailored support…and schools need sufficient government funding to be able to provide that support."

Resource Review: Pupil Toolkits

A great way to increase independence in the classroom and enable learners with SEN to improve their awareness of the strategies that help them to learn is to provide individuals with a toolkit of materials and key equipment to support their needs.

Literacy	Numeracy	SEMH and Sensory
Coloured overlays, reading rulers	Number track (with dot patterns)	Incredible 5-point Scale
Key Word lists	Counters/Beads/Nuggets	Ready-to-learn checklist
Catch-me Cards	Bead string	Worry Eater
Highlighter pens (x 3)	SMART Multiplier ™	Have-a-go scrapbook
MindMaps	Multi-link cubes	Fiddle toy/stress toy
Mini Whiteboard	Highlighter pens	Time Out card
Mnemonics	Catch-me Cards	Timer
Pencil Grip/Handwriting pen	Have-a-go scrapbook	Ear defenders
Have-a-go scrapbook	Blank number line	

Recent Research: Metacognition & Self Regulation for pupils with SEND by Sue Plechowicz

A recent review of research in the UK the Education Endowment Foundation (2018), found that teaching children to use metacognition and self-regulated approaches to learning has 'consistently high levels of impact [for very low cost], with pupils making an average of seven months' additional progress.' (EEF, 2019)

What do we mean by 'Metacognition & Self- Regulation approaches', and how can these relate specifically to pupils with SEND?

The EEF describes these approaches as those which 'aim to help pupils to think about their learning more explicitly, often by teaching them specific strategies for planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning. Interventions are usually designed to give pupils a repertoire of strategies to choose from and the skills to select the most suitable strategy for a given learning task.' (EEF, 2019)

They break self-regulated learning down further as :
- · Cognition – the mental process involved in knowing, understanding and learning
- · Metacognition – often defined as 'learning to learn'
- · Motivation – willingness to engage our metacognition and cognitive skills.

Essentially then, self-regulation is about the extent to which learners are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and the strategies they use to learn. It describes how they can motivate themselves to engage in learning and develop strategies to enhance their learning and to improve. It will look different for learners of different ages, and for different tasks but, to me, this would also describe all the best practice we already know about supporting the learning of our pupils with SEND.

How can we use this knowledge to support our pupils with SEND?
In their Guidance Report (2019)
https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/metacognition-and-self-regulated-learning/ , the EEF recommend the use of the 7-Step model for explicitly teaching metacognitive strategies that can be applied to learning different subject content at different phases and ages. It involves:
1. Activating prior knowledge
2. Explicit strategy instruction
3. Modelling of learned strategy
4. Memorisation of strategy
5. Guided practice
6. Independent practice
7. Structured reflection.
This model fits very well into any small group or one-to-one intervention to support many different specific barriers to learning; and to embed what is learnt in the intervention into the classroom and beyond. A good example would be a 6-week, progressive intervention programme for dyslexic pupils, those with dyslexic-type difficulties or ADHD, which addresses working memory and/or processing difficulties. The adult leading would teach and model a **new** strategy each session – steps 2 & 3. (eg use of Mind maps) Steps 4, 5/6 would happen in the intervention session and step 6 would continue in the main classroom (possibly recorded using a 'Catch Me card'. Steps 1 & 7 would involve reflecting upon their own strengths and difficulties,(probably at end of the session **and** start of next session) whether the particular strategy works for them **and why**… *For example… " I am especially good at using the right side of my brain so I will be good at remembering things that involve colour and pictures. I also need to download all my ideas before I can sort them out so a Mind Map with lots of colour and visuals is a good strategy for me when I plan a story or report."*   The end point of the 6 week programme would be that each individual would have a clear understanding of specific strategies they have 'tried and tested' and know what works for them and why; an understanding of when to use them to best effect, both in the classroom and at home; a tool-kit of resources to use independently and… massively raised confidence and motivation!

This example is only one of many that I could have used. I'm sure you can immediately think of your own too! Read through the EEF's Summary of Recommendations and you will find you can see quite clearly how developing pupils' metacognitive knowledge of how they learn - their knowledge of their own strengths and what they find difficult and what strategies work for them in particular tasks - must be an effective way of improving all pupils', including those with SEND, outcomes.

Related training: 'Interventions to Support Learners with Working Memory & Processing Difficulties' – Bodmin 23rd May; Okehampton 6th June.