

# **Communication, Language and Literacy Development (CLLD) and children with language and literacy difficulties**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### ***What guidance is provided by the Rose Review to meet the needs of children with literacy difficulties?***

The independent review is very much concerned with improving the quality of learning and teaching for all children and preventing early failure. Aspect 3 of the report examines and comments upon what range of provision best supports children with significant literacy difficulties and enables them to catch up with their peers, and the relationship of such targeted intervention programmes with synthetic phonics teaching. The importance of early intervention and responding early to any difficulties cannot be over-estimated. Careful assessment of children's progress should alert teachers and practitioners quickly to those children who are not making sufficient progress so that steps can be taken to prevent further difficulties arising.

For many children, incipient reading difficulties can be prevented, or nipped in the bud, by thorough, early assessments of their performance. This assessment information should then be used to adjust and tailor work more closely to children's needs. These adjustments can often be made effectively so that children continue to be taught in their regular classes. Where this is not in their best interests, however, the arrangements for intervention advocated by the Primary Strategy remain sound advice. That is to say, work should be adapted within the classroom, further support in small groups should be provided for those who need it and individual programmes should be provided for those with the greatest need, some of whom will have special educational needs or learning difficulties and disabilities. (para 132)

### ***What is meant by the three waves of intervention in respect of early reading?***

The National Strategies advocate a systematic approach to teaching based on three 'waves' of tailored support. Schools should use a 'waves' approach to plan, design and tailor effective and appropriate provision for all children.

- Wave 1 – The effective inclusion of all children in daily 'quality first teaching'

In terms of early reading, this means the provision of a rich language curriculum that fosters all four interdependent strands of language: speaking, listening, reading and writing, and provides access for all children to high quality phonic work. It is important to remember that the need for interventions, or 'catch-up' programmes, may be significantly reduced when quality first teaching is well matched to the different abilities of beginner

readers. An early, systematic, high quality phonic programme within Wave 1 should do much to prevent early difficulties occurring in the first place.

It is not the purpose of intervention work to shore up weak teaching at Wave 1. Settings and schools should establish quality first teaching to minimise the risk of children falling behind and thereby secure the most cost effective use of resources. High quality phonic work should therefore be a priority within Wave 1 teaching. (page 71)

- Wave 2 – Wave 1, plus additional time-limited, tailored intervention support

Wave 2 provision is designed to increase rates of progress and secure learning for groups of pupils which puts them back on course to meet or exceed age related expectations. This usually takes the form of a tight, structured programme of small group support, carefully targeted and delivered by teachers or teaching assistants who have the skills to help pupils achieve their learning objectives. This can occur outside (but in addition to) whole class lessons, or be built into mainstream lessons as part of guided work. Critically, intervention support needs to help pupils apply their learning in mainstream lessons and should therefore be fully compatible with mainstream practice. It is important to recognize that the prime purpose of intervention programmes at Wave 2 is not to compensate for weak teaching at Wave 1.

It should be recognized that some learning difficulties may be caused or exacerbated by the school's learning environment or adult/child relationships. This means looking carefully at such matters as classroom organization, teaching materials, teaching style and differentiation in order to decide how these can be developed so that the child is enabled to learn effectively. (SEN Code of Practice 2001)

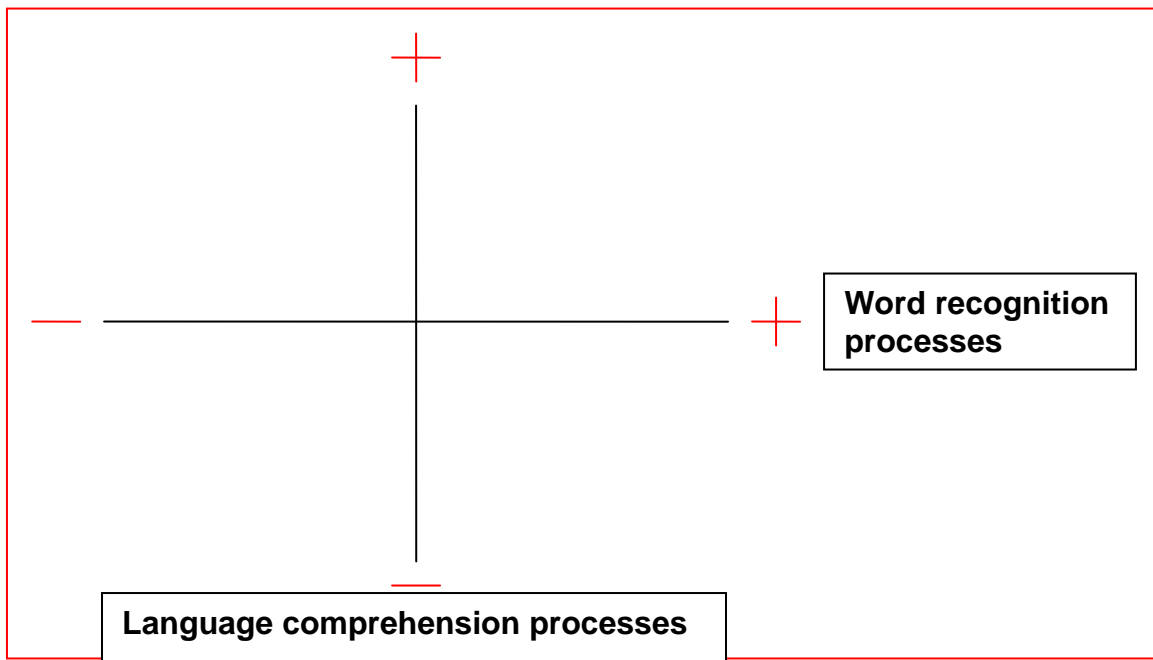
- Wave 3 – Wave 1, plus additional highly personalised interventions

Wave 3 interventions are highly personalized to meet the individual needs of small numbers of children experiencing significant literacy difficulties, and include specifically targeted approaches for those children whose main areas of need fall within the SEN Code of Practice. They are:

- Cognition and learning;
- Behaviour, emotional and social development;
- Communication and interaction;
- Sensory and/or physical needs.

***How does the conceptual framework of the 'Simple View of Reading' relate to children with language and literacy difficulties?***

The Simple View of Reading proposes that skilled reading entails the development of a set of processes by which the words on the page are recognized and understood (i.e. word recognition processes), development of increasingly sophisticated language comprehension processes, by which texts, as well as spoken language, are understood and interpreted. Learning to read therefore involves setting up processes by which the words on the page can be recognized and understood and continuing to develop the language comprehension processes that underlie both spoken and written language comprehension. These processes are both necessary for reading but neither is sufficient on its own. Children who cannot adequately recognize the words on the page are, by that fact alone, prevented from fully understanding the text; however recognizing and understanding the words on the page is no guarantee that the text will be understood. These two aspects of reading development are represented visually as two axes in the conceptual framework of the Simple View of Reading:



Clear differentiation between the two dimensions encourages teachers not to expect that the children they teach will necessarily show equal performance or progress in each dimension. It makes explicit that different kinds of teaching are needed to develop word recognition skills from those that are needed to foster the comprehension of written and spoken language.

Four different patterns of performance should be observable across the two dimensions. As teachers assess children's performance and progress within both word recognition and language comprehension processes, they need to identify children's particular learning needs, and use this analysis to guide further teaching and to plan the next steps. Careful tracking of children's progress is vital for the early identification of those children who are falling behind so that teaching can be appropriately targeted to meet individual needs.

### ***What about meeting the needs of children with specific communication and language disabilities?***

It is generally acknowledged that successful development of literacy depends upon competency in oral language skills. There is plenty of evidence which documents the impact of poor language skills on reading performance. However, the type of literacy difficulty which the child experiences will depend on the particular communication and language needs of the child. A focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills through the Early Years Foundation Stage and Primary years is essential for all children, but particularly for those experiencing spoken language difficulties. Outlined below are some areas of possible difficulty and the implications for beginner readers:

- Children with Phonological (Speech Sound) Difficulties  
\_Linking phonemes to graphemes, segmenting, blending and manipulating sounds may be much more problematic for children with phonological difficulties. Nonetheless, there is evidence that many children with such difficulties go on to have no difficulty with learning to read and spell although the same is not true for children who have persistent complex disordered speech patterns. It is therefore important to invest considerable time in the activities outlined in Phase One of *Letters and Sounds* in order to support children's phonological awareness. As children move into Phase Two and beyond, and develop word recognition skills, teachers need to be mindful that their lack of fluency and automaticity in decoding sounds may hinder comprehension.
- Children with syntactic (sentence structure), semantic (word meaning) or pragmatic language difficulties

Literacy acquisition will be affected for children who have problems with syntax, semantics or discourse. Children with impoverished vocabulary, or who are unable to understand complex oral language and word meanings are likely to have poor reading comprehension, and those who find it difficult to make inferences will find making sense of written text difficult.

Children with pragmatic language difficulties, and notably those on the autistic spectrum, can be hyperlexic, that is having excellent decoding skills but showing limited understanding of what they have read. By being mindful of the Simple View of Reading, teachers can assess children's progress on each of the axes, and plan activities which support and develop children's language structures and language comprehension.

For further information: *Communication Disability and Literacy Difficulties: ICAN 2006*

### ***What about provision for children with physical or sensory needs?***

Children with a physical disability may not require different programmes of phonic work, particularly if they are receiving 'quality first teaching' within their regular classes. Some may indeed make progress to, or above, the expected levels for their age, given appropriate support within an inclusive framework. This may also be true for children with sensory impairments although some modifications to the phonic programme may be necessary. It will be important for example, to emphasise the multi-sensory aspect of the

phonic session or to intensify support for speaking and listening by using visual clues, signs and gestures.

### ***What is the advice on withdrawing children from the phonics session?***

Quality first teaching is the entitlement of every child and should provide optimum conditions for all. For beginner readers, there are significant benefits of learning things together as children are encouraged to engage in interesting tasks that involve helping each other for example, through partner work, as well as learning from carefully planned activities. For a small number of children who, despite such teaching, are not making progress and who are falling behind their peers, intervention will be necessary. Effective intervention work should focus on the phonic skills children have already met in their mainstream class but should provide more help and time from skilled adults to strengthen and secure those aspects needing further reinforcement.

Effective phonics teaching makes full use of all additional adults. This may be achieved through in-class support, for example, by carefully scaffolding the learning during the session or through providing additional support outside the session or outside the classroom. The important point is that all the contributions to a child's programme must be implemented to an agreed plan that is closely monitored and co-ordinates intervention and mainstream work. Irrespective of whether this work is undertaken in the regular class or elsewhere, the gains made through intervention work should be sustained and built upon after it is no longer deemed necessary for children to have the support of an intervention programme. Where additional support is regularly provided by teaching assistants (TAs), then they should be thoroughly trained with children's specific needs in mind and have the opportunity to routinely work alongside teachers in the mainstream.

### ***Which intervention programmes are appropriate?***

Deciding on an intervention programme requires careful assessment of the child's specific needs and interests as well as a knowledge of the range and purpose of the schemes available. Intervention programmes need to be carefully matched to learning needs and in order for this to happen, teachers and practitioners need to have a very clear picture of a child's strengths and difficulties. In reaching a decision, it will be important to draw on information gleaned from other involved agencies, such as speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, specialist teachers etc., as well as discussion with parents. A useful summary is provided in the Basic Skills Agency publication *Boosting Reading in Primary Schools 2005* which provides details of each of the main schemes, the appropriate age range, the length of the intervention and a brief description of the programme.