

Case Study A

Type of school	Academy Converter
School Name	School A
No. on roll	81
Age range	4-11 years
Focus of case study	Adapt teaching and planning to meet need
Ofsted	Good (2022)

The school application to SIAG:

'I am the SENDCO across 4 schools within our Trust and the challenges are very similar in the schools. However, in Q, we have a mixed class with years 2, 3 and 4 and a high level of SEND. There is a high % of children with traits of ASD and ADHD in that one class alone, some either already having been accepted onto the pathway, awaiting a response or a referral being made. A plethora of strategies are being used including: positioning desks on their own, away from others and facing walls, using a standing desk for one child, using desk screens, wobble cushions, weighted lap blankets, fidget toys, chew toys, counters, visual timetables, now and next boards, task management boards, emotional regulation cards, sensory and movement breaks, allowance for additional processing time, talk tins and reasonable adaptations teaching.

Within this one class there are also children who have dyslexia and children with cognition and learning difficulties.

The main challenges are around trying to adapt the teaching and planning to meet the needs of all of these children whilst still fulfilling the expectations of the Trust. Having some support around adapting teaching and planning would be very welcome.

Looking at the current pedagogy, curriculum timetable, planning and expectations in books and how these could be adapted to ensure that the needs of the children are being met and that they are achieving is needed.'

Initial Work Proposal:

3 days divided as:

- ½ day initial consultation meeting with SENCO and school specific plan development. (completed)
- 1 day work with TA's- split over 2 x ½ days
- 1 day planning and IEP mapping - split into ½ day with Y3/4 teacher and ½ day with SENCO
- ½ day impact evaluation and future provision mapping with SENCO

<p><u>TA Shared Practice Session 1: ½ day</u></p> <p>Indicative planning shared prior to visit to enable SIAG Team to prepare any resources they wish to share.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEN Practitioner will work alongside the class team to identify any points for discussion and support- This will inform and shape the 2nd session. • SEN Practitioner will be in the classroom to gain an understanding of the context of how you are meeting the varied SEN needs in order to identify the best ways of supporting the staff. • Opportunity for a debrief picking out key learning points and identifying next steps. 	<p><u>TA Workshop Session 2: ½ day</u></p> <p>Format: Workshop style sharing of relevant information by SEN Practitioner followed by an opportunity to share best practice</p> <p><u>How and why we Communicate: What is the Total Communication Approach?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Means, Reasons and Opportunities and Communication Friendly Environments • The role of non-verbal communication • Challenges with Communication • Behaviour is Communication (Sensory seeking/sensory avoiding/low registration) <p><u>Strategies to support everyday communication in school</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing SLCN recommendations into 1:1 and small group activities • Intensive Interaction • Visuals (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) • Barrier Games • Commenting vs Questioning • Optimising communication through regulation strategies • Having restorative conversations
<p><u>IEP's/Planning with Sessions: 2 x ½ days during PPA time</u></p> <p>½ day session with SENCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation and adaptive provision mapping. <p>½ day session with teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation and adaptation of planning • Optimising planning to support teacher workload. • Reflective conversations, sharing practice and discussing barriers to progress. 	<p><u>Evaluation, Impact and Future Provision Mapping Session: ½ day</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of work and the outcomes delivered. • Opportunity for feedback linked to SIAG outcomes. • Shared identification of next steps and signposting support for any identified school-based needs.

School Story:

School A were initially an engaged school with a proactive SENCO looking to maximise the support offered by SIAG. However, the school has significant resource /diary issues due to the size and location of the school. The school comprises of three mixed aged classes that cross

key stages and there are no TA's working in the school only one adult helper. The SIAG Practitioner found great difficulty in finding dates to work with teachers or the adult helper and the sessions were cancelled repeatedly. The first visit with the teacher proved to be difficult as the teacher was very resistant to support mostly due to the difficulties imposed by the MAT wide initiatives. The second visit with the adult helper was more positive but the school stressed they were not qualified so any advice given must reflect that. The final visit for trauma informed training could not be done with any school staff and was disseminated to the SENCO to pass on. After the first visit a written recommendation report was sent to the SENCO to share with Senior Leadership to support with the concerns raised around resource / SEN support within school. Please see a summary of the recommendations made below.

Work Completed in School by SEND Practitioner:

Visit 1 – meeting with SENCO and Y2/3/4 Teacher to discuss strategies for that class due to identified high level of SEND need in class.

SEND Practitioner audited the classroom and looked at systems and processes for the school and the Trust. What was found was great difficulty in meeting the needs of children with SEND in this school.

Visit 2- in class modelling and working with parent helper. SEN Practitioner met with the parent helper for a discussion on challenges and what they would like support with. This was followed by alongside observation of the parent working with children in the class. From this the SEND Practitioner was able to model strategies that were appropriate to support the children effectively.

A recommendation report was then written following both visits. This was sent to the SENCO who wanted to share this with the Trust Senior Leadership. The intention of the SENCO sharing this was to address the concerns raised around resourcing, staff levels and the MAT policies.

Recommendations made by SEN Practitioner:

- Time, staffing and access to resources is an area of consideration for the school and for the trust. A deputy SENCO or admin assistant for SEND paperwork would help to secure funding for those children with SEND who need additional support. This would help to support the EHCP process, referrals and give time to complete the Neurodiversity Profiling Tool with learners.
- To facilitate any targeted intervention in school, it would be necessary to have staff to be able to deliver this. Currently, there are not any members of staff to work with individuals or groups to complete interventions. This is currently a barrier to planning, delivering and evaluating targeted intervention.
- We discussed the neurodiversity profiling tool for the learners in Year3/4 to generate discussion around how best to support those learners. This should be used to create a one-page profile to help those children. Time is an issue with around 1-2 hours of staff time required to complete the assessment.

- Having one class, including key stage 1 and 2 together makes delivery of lesson content challenging. I would recommend looking at this for September and try to ensure that mixed groups are all in the same key stage.
- I would consider decluttering the classroom environment. The displays have a lot of information and could be very distracting for neurodiverse learners. It might be that essential key words, definitions or symbols are laminated or kept in a folder on desks and brought out as and when they are being referred to. This will help the students to focus on what is important and avoid distractions.
- I have suggested a formal 'check-in' with every student as they arrive in the morning. This could be an activity or game and ensure you know how your learners are arriving that morning and can intervene early with those who may be dysregulated.
- I would recommend encouraging the students to take responsibility for their own focus and attention and for them to evaluate their own performance in a lesson, this could be a symbolised checklist of success criteria.
- Consider transitions and try to start new sessions with brain gym or similar.
- When students need a sensory or movement break, consider structuring the activity such as listed deep breathing activity, or wall push ups. A member of staff should accompany the children to support them and help them to ensure they are regulated and ready to learn when they return.
- Consider a behaviour agreement with the learners we discussed. This could be linked to rewards. You could offer immediate, intermediate and long-term rewards to motivate the students, as we had discussed the student who has not been able to get their reward.
- Consider peer tutoring to challenge more able students and to support those in need. Perhaps guided groups for the shared reading sessions.
- For some of the students we discussed, they might be better suited at the front of the room, although the standing desks and separate stations appear to be successful. You might consider moving the standing desks to the back of the room, so that those children can face the front/teacher/board.
- We talked about task management boards. To help with consistent use of the now and next boards, you could use laminated images/symbols or learning objectives/tasks that can be moved onto the board during the lesson.

Other resources/recommendations provided:

SEN Practitioner signposted to the Early Years team at Cornwall Council to support with pupils the school felt were having difficulties with ADHD. The ND Profiling Tool was recommended to the SENCO to support conversations with teachers and parents about emerging need. SENDIASS was also recommended to support parents and carers.

Learnings:

School A is a small rural school that is part of a larger MAT. The school has low levels of support staff and high staff turnover. With mixed aged/ key stage classes the teachers and MAT SENCO reported difficulties in meeting the needs of the children with SEND. It was difficult for the SIAG

team to complete the work in school due to staff capacity and diary issues. The teacher was looking for support with classroom management, behaviour management and SEND strategies but struggled to implement them due to inflexible MAT wide policies. Strategies to adapt learning and the classroom to better meet needs were shared by the SEN Practitioner but the teacher felt unable to implement them. It was observed by the Practitioner that the teacher was not implementing basic strategies in the classroom and therefore struggling with behaviour. The recommendation report was written to reflect the challenges the teacher and school were facing to support the SENCO in finding a solution. The SIAG team since offered more support but due to the continued resourcing issues in school they were not able to go back and complete further work with the school staff. The SEND Operations Manager was due to deliver SEMH training to the SENCO who hoped to disseminate this with school staff at a later date but again this session was cancelled multiple times by the SENCO.

Evaluation:

General Feedback:

- All positive from start to finish -the application, process, communication, people-approachable very supportive, will be recommending it
- 'It is nice to know we are all in the same boat'
- 'What I applied is what we received, and the conversations had, have all been around what we'd applied for'
- SENCO was really pleased with the service and felt it had the outcome that she had hoped for. This was very much to do with reassurance they are doing what they can.

Is there a greater understanding of how a graduated response could be designed, delivered and accessed?

"Can now tell the powers that be this is what we need- please give us funding"

We discussed recommendations- to utilise whole school approaches and suggested Autism in Schools team, Early Years team and referring families to Early Help. The SENCO felt that while whole school approaches are beneficial, they feel there is higher need for targeted 1:1 intervention but they cannot utilise these as they do not have the resources. The SENCO is working closely with the Autism in Schools team and is using the ND tool and referring regularly to Early Help. Parents are not engaging so requests for support from Early Help keep getting turned down.

From the conversation it was clear that the graduated response is not being utilised in this school and the attitude is still very much focussed on specialist for a few rather than universal. The SENCO stated the teacher that was having the most difficulties has not implemented what was suggested but does not need to. The SIAG team were not able to have the intended impact on this school due to the culture and attitude of the SENCO and teacher around time and resourcing.

Has the service facilitated or instigated changes in practice?

“Parent helper felt she was upskilled and that has led to her applying for the apprenticeship if she had not had the support, she may not have taken that leap and applied.”

“Not sure it changed things for the class teacher, as she is doing a lot anyway and there is not enough capacity to change things, but it gave her confidence and reassurance, she is doing the right thing. It is good to know- yes we are doing the right thing, worth doing it for that alone.”

The evaluation discussion revealed that overall, the MAT has issues with support staff and do not allocate TA's full time to classes. The attitude is a 'full-time teacher with occasional support from TA's'. In this school the EY (nursery, reception and Y1) has 2 TA's split across the week but there is a child with high level need which takes up most of the TA's time. The middle class 2/3/4 has an adult volunteer still only for mornings- they have since applied for the apprenticeship so will increase the time in school when they start. The top class 4/5/6 now has a TA nearly full time, but they also cover PPA. Some of the children who were in the middle class have moved into the top class, which has helped as it is a much calmer environment, and they have settled down. Since the SIAG Practitioner came in there is less need around ADHD and more around SEMH as a new family has joined with significant needs.

In all of the MAT's schools, they are finding much higher numbers of children needing higher levels of input and are not getting the support they need while they wait for services to come in or waiting for EHCP assessments. They are using the ND profiling tool for some children and to support parents. The SENCO is concerned they are doing everything they can to support the children and putting everything in place, but they are still finding it very challenging and there are several children now at risk of permanent exclusion because they cannot meet need. They are considering this as the only option left. She mentioned several children with autism who have school-based anxiety and refuse to come in to school. TAs are going to family homes to collect these children in an attempt to get them into school (this happens in another school within the MAT) and they have a MAT wide attendance issue.

This school was very happy with the service from SIAG but only wanted someone to come and tell them what they already knew rather about resourcing problems rather than giving new strategies. Interestingly the SENCO can identify the challenges in this school and in some conversations stated she wanted to make systemic changes, but in other conversations was accepting of the position they are in and didn't want to implement any strategies. The culture within the Trust was geared towards supporting high level need only with bespoke interventions and any whole class/school universal strategies were not valued or implemented. However, the infrastructure of the Trust and school would in fact suit universal approaches as the severe lack of support staff and resources means interventions and additional support cannot be provided. The SIAG team felt there was little impact from the service and more time would need to be spent in the school modelling/demonstrating approaches to support teachers to see the benefits of universal approaches. Coaching would also have been very beneficial to further support the teachers to practice and embed these. At the time of the evaluation the SENCO had not sent off the written report to leadership and did not plan on doing so, despite the report being written to support the SENCO in making systemic long-term changes to benefit the

school. It should also be noted this school also has no senior leadership on site with an executive Headteacher that is a class teacher in another school within the Trust.

We reflect from this that the culture and attitudes of staff members at all levels has huge impact on the SEND provision in a school. It appeared the rigid structures imposed by this MAT and lack support were preventing teachers from even trying new strategies or being able to implement and let alone embed any. Further work would need to be done to understand the MAT structures and policies and 1:1 coaching with teachers to support them to make effective decisions. This would begin to show positive impacts on the children with SEND in their classes. Smaller rural schools face some of the same challenges as larger schools and our reflections are that small rural schools may need different kinds of support and working with MAT leaders first could prove useful in these cases. Our work stretches beyond the classroom and can support systemic issues in the wider context of the Trust.

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