

The Autism Toolbox

Whole School Approaches

Hazel McCallum

Workshop Outline

- Introductions
- Discussion Point – Whole School Approaches?
- What The Autism Toolbox says about Whole School Approaches
- Activity – Using practical ideas/responses as suggested in the Toolbox
- My experience of developing a whole school approach at Robert Owen
- Discussion Point – Your experiences and observations
- Creating a positive whole school ethos and approach
- Discussion Point – Planning for change
- Summing up - feedback

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Robert Owen Memorial Primary in Lanark

DHT with responsibility for the Autism support classes

Opened in August 2006

Four classes supporting up to 24 P1-7 pupils

Discussion Point 1 – What does a Whole School Approach look like?

- Consider the question: “Does your school have a whole school approach to inclusion and inclusive practice?” How would you answer?

Possibly consider

- Does everyone in your school feel appreciated and welcome / able to participate in all aspects of whole school life?
- Are individual needs met both within and outwith the classroom?
- Does inclusion permeate all levels and in all activities and settings throughout the whole school?

Oral feedback

The Autism Toolbox Whole School Approaches

The Centre for Inclusive Education – Independent organisation which promotes inclusion as a basic human right for every child.

www.csie.org.uk



“Inclusion happens when everyone feels appreciated and welcome to participate.”

“Creating inclusive cultures”

- In an inclusive culture the community is secure, accepting, collaborating and stimulating.
- The principles and values guide decisions about policies and daily practice so that school development becomes a continuous process.

Ainscow and Booth (2002) “Index for Inclusion”

What is Autism?

Autism is commonly typified by what is known as the triad of impairments (Wing 1996) The Toolbox P29

- Social Communication
- Social Interaction
- Social Imagination and Flexible Thinking

Making your school inclusive – areas/approaches to be considered. (Toolbox P146)

- Playground issues
- Visually communicative environment
- Buddy or friendship systems
- Safe havens
- Special interest lunch and after school clubs
- Promotion of positive perceptions of diversity
- CPD for staff
- Awareness raising for all school staff and parent helpers
- Meaningful parental involvement supported by effective home/school communication
- Robust anti-bullying practices
- Recognition that bullying for children on the autistic spectrum may take many forms and indeed they may be easily led into being bullies themselves.
- Attitude of count them in rather than leave them out
- Willingness to take reasonable steps to adapt the environment
- Equity but individuality
- Recognising wider achievement

Example of good practice (p147 – Example 17)

Pupil already included for gym, drama, music and RME. The next step is to have lunch in the main dining hall then play with a group of friends in the playground.

- Training with class teacher and dining staff
- Training with two buddies
- Base staff ensured sequence of events was clear to pupil
- Base staff ensured that all support staff and pupils were known to pupil

Impact of the Environment

- The physical environment plays a significant role in the effective learning and teaching of most pupils, but for pupils on the autistic spectrum it needs specific consideration.
- When the overall potential impact of autism (triad of impairments / sensory issues) is considered the impact of the environment on learning, teaching and interaction becomes far more apparent.
- The key function of inclusive practice is that adjustment should be made to enable the child to access the curriculum, school, home life and their community.
- Environmental supports are materials that assist individual children and should take into account their:
 - Sensory needs
 - Their need to understand the passage of time
 - Their modes of learning and strengths
 - Their need for accurate and reliable information
- A few minor adjustments are essential for the individual will but will also be beneficial to peers.

www.nas.org.uk

Evaluating the Environment SPELL – National Autistic Society

The Philosophy of SPELL

SPELL is a framework developed by The National Autistic Society for understanding and responding to the needs of children, young people and adults with autism. The framework reduces the disabling effects of autism and provides a cornerstone for communication.

- Structure
- Positive Approaches
- Empathy
- Low Arousal
- Links

- SPELL recognises individual need and emphasises that planning and intervention be based on and organised around this.
- SPELL recognises the need for working together in the interests of the person with ASD.
- Specific training in developing and applying the framework is available via the NAS.
www.autism.org.uk/spell

More information on SPELL

- Go to NAS website: www.nas.org.uk and search SPELL or Google SPELL NAS.

Activity – Using practical ideas and responses from the Toolbox (p150 – 154)

- Look at the scenarios and *responses*.
- Match each response to the appropriate scenario.
- Add any additional ideas or comments of your own to the blank sheets of paper.

Oral feedback – discuss any additional ideas

My experience so far



ASD provision within
Robert Owen
Memorial Primary
School in Lanark

Class development at ROMPS

- 2006 – 1 class of 6 children, P1-3
- 2007 - 2 classes of 6 children, P1-4
- 2008 – 3 classes of up to 6 children, P1-7
- 2009 – 4 classes of up to 6 children
- Future – Our capacity is for 24 pupils spread between the four classes
- P1-7pupils with 1 DHT, 4 teachers & 4 SSA's in four ASN classrooms spread throughout the school



Discussion Point 2 - Your Experience and Observations

In relation to our areas of discussion so far consider the following:

- Any positive examples of whole school approaches you have experienced or observed.
- Barriers you have experienced or observed in relation to these being developed
- Solutions you have used or have observed in use to overcome possible barriers

Creating a whole school ethos and approach

- Work towards creating a "Culture of Inclusion"
- School Improvement Plan
- Look at school policies
- Review and evaluate current practice
- Regularly review: training needs, environment and practice keeping the pupil with ASD and your knowledge of ASD at the forefront of your mind
- Inclusive Education is the right of every child – a right we as educators must address through the development of a positive whole school ethos and approach

Discussion Point 3 – Planning for Change

If viewing your given areas from the perspective of a child on the autistic spectrum how would you adapt them to make them autism friendly?

Summing up

- Where do you see your establishment on the journey to a positive whole school ethos and approach?
- What should your next steps be?
