

Wolverhampton Information, Advice and Support Service

Parent/Carer Workshop

25th September 2017

'The key to positive communication'



Elaine Westwood

How do we communicate?



What is communication?

The imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium.

Why do parents and carers need to communicate with schools and settings?

Legislation

To understand everyone's role and why they're involved with your child

Gives a clear message to the child

To ensure everyone knows what difficulties your child is experiencing and any progress that is being made

To be involved!

Support work will be more effective

Support can continue at home

Recognise knowledge & expertise

The SEND Code of Practice

The SEND Code of Practice provides statutory guidance for organisations (this includes schools and settings) working with and supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

The SEND Code of Practice is underpinned by Part 3 of the Children and Families ACT 2014



Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014

.... in carrying out their functions under the Act in relation to disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs (SEN), must have regard to:

- The views, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their parents /carers
- The importance of the participation in decision making
- The importance of the provision of information and support, and
- Working towards the best possible outcomes

What should that look like for families?

- Improved engagement with your child's setting and school
- To be kept informed of your child's progress regularly
- Your unique view of your child highly valued and fundamental to building an accurate picture of need
- Your views and the views of your child are very important to the school and Local Authority - co-production of solution focused systems and provision
- Focus on outcomes rather than provision or hours of support
- High levels of ambition, aspirations and expectations
- A change in culture relating to SEND - development of services and support which will take time, understanding and joint working for all

Activity

What makes a good listener?



Meetings - what would make you feel uncomfortable?

- Introductions are not made.
- Entering a room already full of professionals and believing that discussions about you or your child have already taken place.
- Professionals all appear to know each other.
- Jargon and complicated expressions are used without explanation.
- Annoying expressions/excuses.
- Body language (e.g. looking at watch/distracted)

What do parents and carers want?

- To be recognised as the expert in their child
- To know what is going on for their child in school.
- Informal contact that is positive, regular, planned, non intrusive, two-way and early enough to make a difference.
- To feel 'listened to', respected and not dismissed, labelled, or blamed.
- To feel assured that internal communication takes place so that strategies agreed are carried through by everyone who comes into contact with their child.
- To receive good news - successes however small.
- Their child's voice to be heard

Best practice

“.....discussions with parents should be structured in such a way that they develop a good understanding of the pupil's areas of strength and difficulty, the parents' concerns, the agreed outcomes sought for the child and the next steps.” SEND Code of Practice 6.39

A structured way of working

Understand

Plan actions and strategies

Implement/Do

Agree outcomes

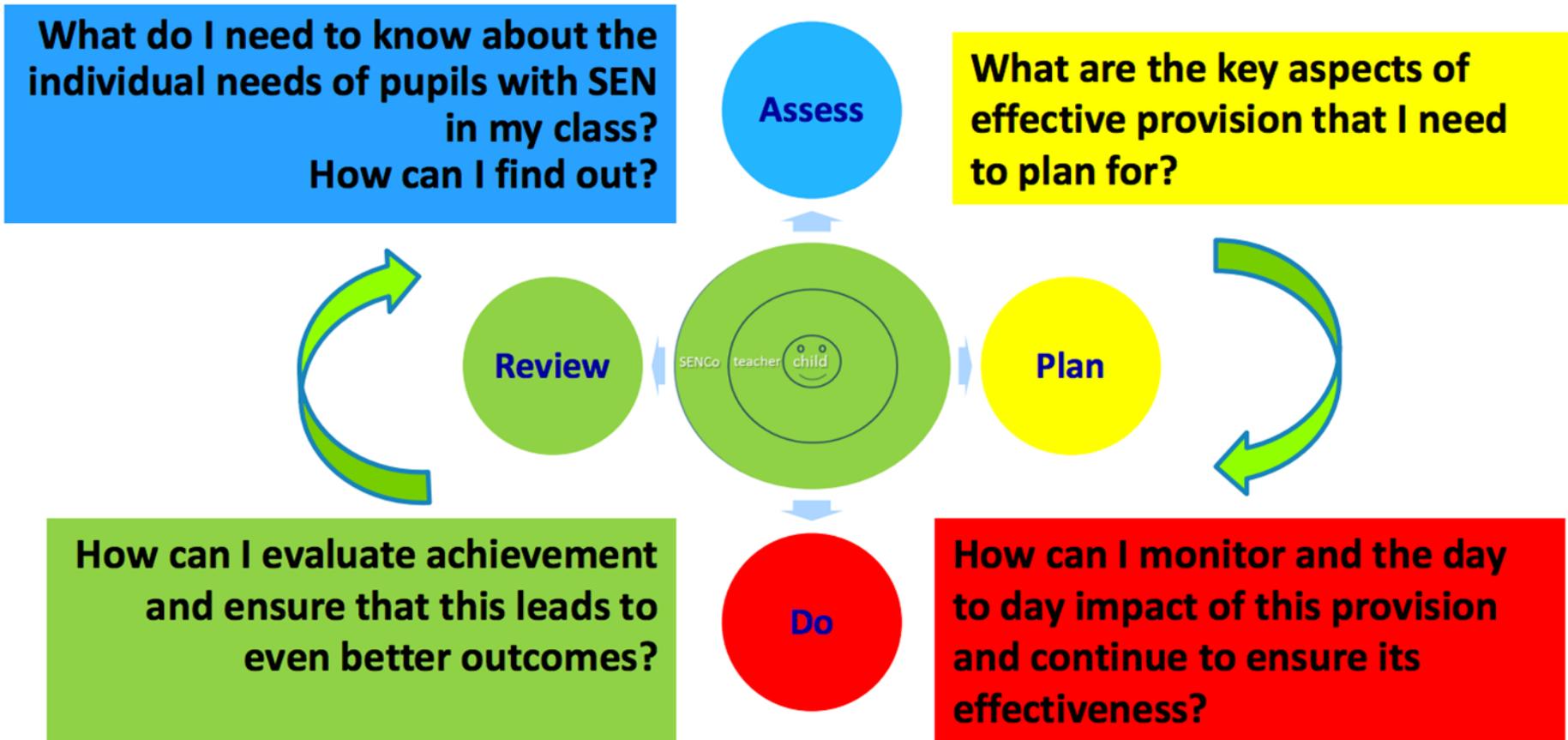
Build relationships

Explore

Review

Keep in touch

The Graduated Approach ...from a teacher's perspective



The graduated approach - from a parental perspective

What extra information do I have about my child that his/her teacher/s needs to know?
How involved am I in assessments?

Assess

What provision is important for my child and why?
How involved am I in planning SEN provision?

Review

My
child

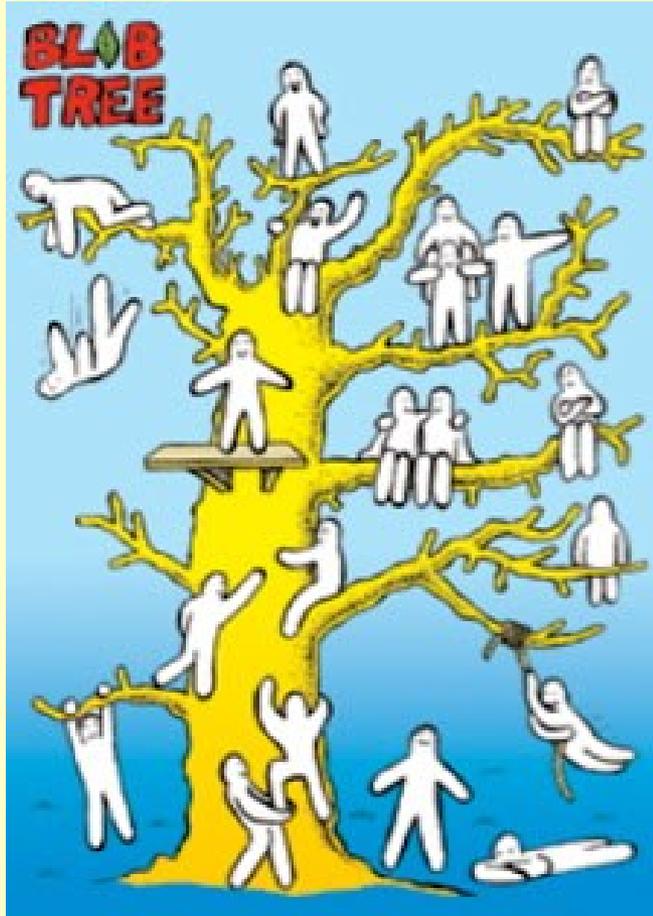
Plan

Do I know enough about the progress my child is making in school?
How am I involved in reviews?

Do

Do I know enough about what difference the provision is making on my child's progress and development?

How are you doing?



Tips

Find out when staff are available

Be realistic

Be clear on what you want

Recognise skills and expertise

Agree the best way to communicate

Try to see the positive side

Preparing for a meeting factsheet

"A stronger voice for parents"

"Parents have told us that good, honest and open communication is one of the important components of building confidence and good relationships. Face-to-face communication with parents, treating them as equal partners with expertise in their children's needs is crucial to establishing and sustaining confidence. Where things go wrong, the root causes can often be traced to poor communication between school, local authority and parent."

"Parents should be able to access the information that they need, when they need it, in ways that are convenient to them."

"In the most successful schools the effective engagement of parents has had a profound impact on children's progress and the confidence between the school and parent. Parents need to be listened to more and brought into a partnership with statutory bodies in a more meaningful way..."

Questions and feedback



Thank you

Future Events

Support for children and young people in education

specifically those without Education, Health and Care plans

Thursday 16th November 2017 12.30-14.30 at Gem Centre

Education, Health and Care plans

For those with plans or going through statutory assessment

Wednesday 8th November 2017 9.30-11.30 at Tettenhall Wood School

Monday 12th March 2018 12.30-14.30 at Gem Centre