Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools
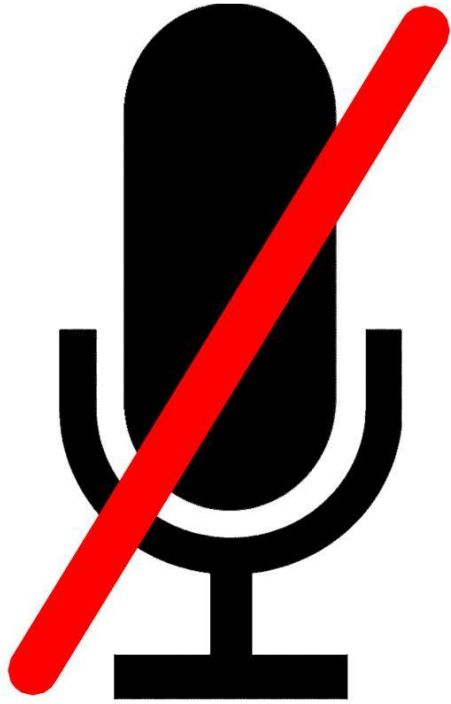
Thursday 10th March 2022

Laura Howling

Director

Kent Associate Research School

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Housekeeping

Protocols

An opportunity to put aside the day-to-day emails;

A chance to contribute and share;

Time to listen and think;

Cameras on if you are comfortable;

On mute unless contributing.

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Today… AIMS

❏ To explore the key messages from the EEF's Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools Guidance Report

❏ To consider how the five evidence-based recommendations related to supporting SEND students can influence learning in your classrooms

❏ To examine practical ideas and 'tweaks', based on the research, to use in the classroom in order to support our most vulnerable students

❏ To look at how our training courses will work in the future

But first: The Mission

The Education Endowment Foundation and the Research Schools Network are dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement

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Synthesis

Generation   Mobilisation

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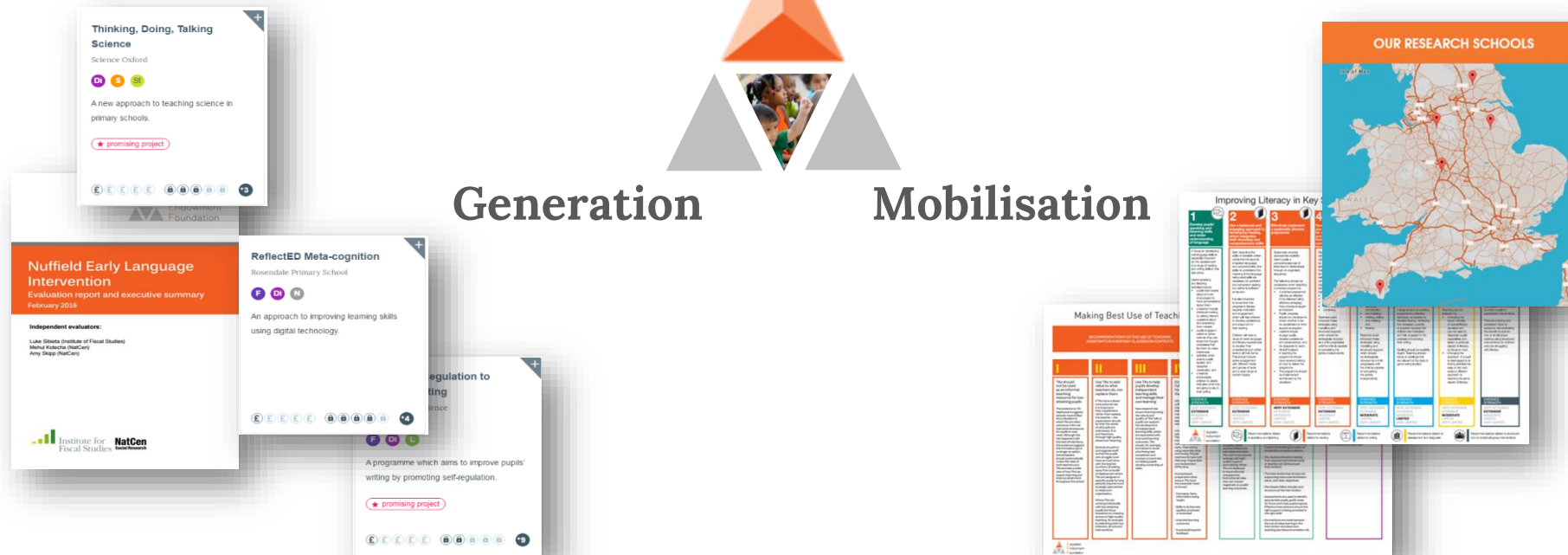
Using evidence

Evidence	**+**	Professional Expertise	**=**	Evidence Informed Practice

Evidence provides 'best bets' to help teachers and leaders to make more informed decisions about what to do (and what to stop doing).

Research evidence *supplements* expertise, it does not supplant it.

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Today's session is informed by the EEF's Guidance report:

Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools

Available online

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS
Guidance Report

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Today… STRUCTURE

The scope of the research

Guidance Report:
5
Recommendations

Impact in your schools
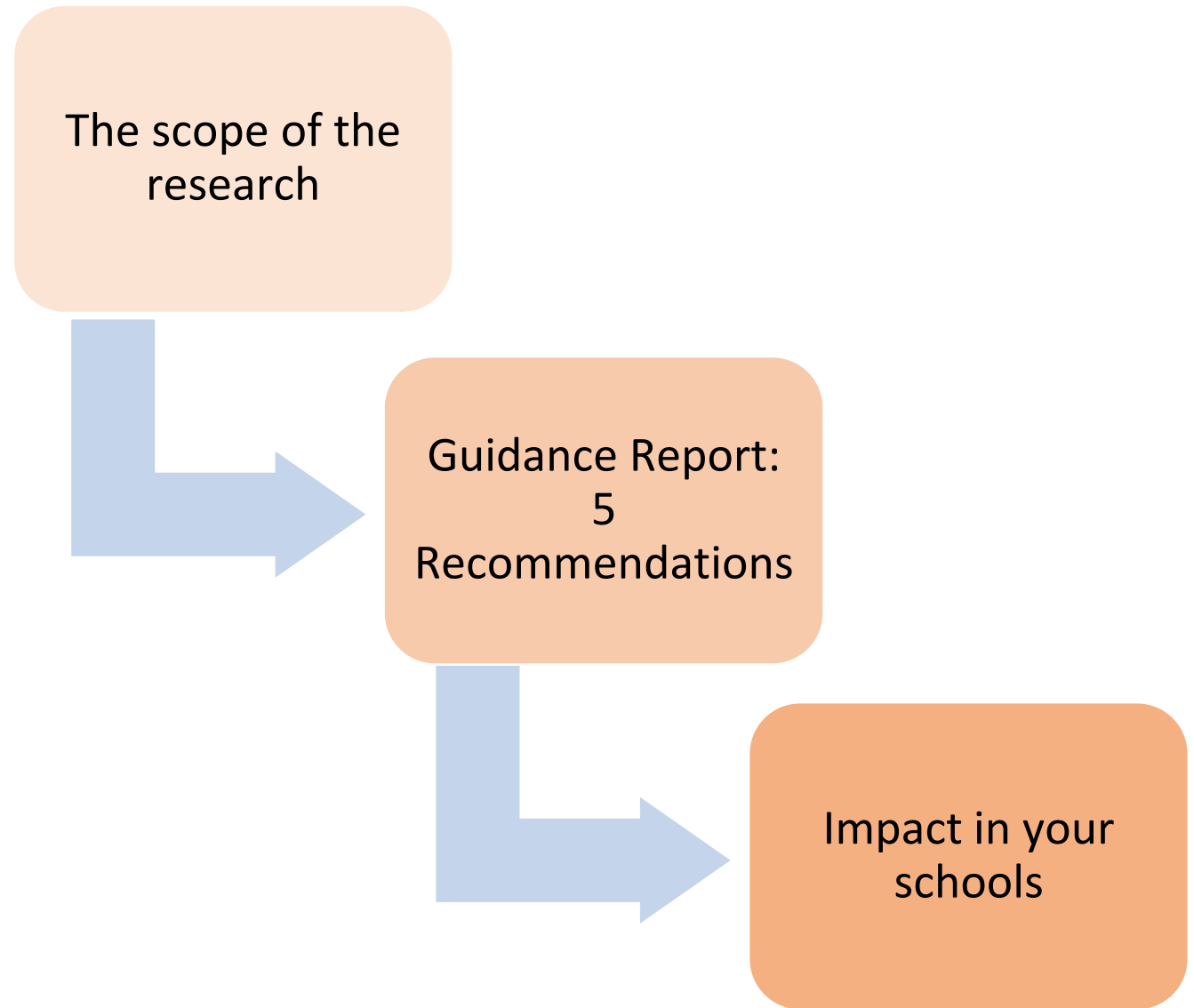
Scope of guidance report

o This report is about special educational needs and provision rather than any adaptations schools may need to make for pupils with a physical disability or a long-term health condition

o The review focused on research related to pupils aged 5–16

o The focus is on improving the quality of teaching and learning in mainstream classrooms

o Not every issue relevant to pupils with SEND is covered in detail. The guidance does not address the complexities around funding or availability of specialist provision, nor does it focus on types of need or conditions. Those issues are of course important, but beyond the scope of this report.

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Some key messages

Everyone a teacher of SEND…

"Every teacher is a teacher of special educational needs."
(SEND Code of Practice)

Inclusion is imperative:

- ❑ Pupils with SEND can sometimes be in a mainstream school but not included in high quality teaching

- ❑ An inclusive school ensures they are not just *in* the school, but *part* of the school – the same opportunities for all

Language matters – talking about SEND

❑ 'Pupils are SEND' – best language?

❑ Challenging the view that 'a pupil with SEND will always have SEND'

Supporting students with SEND is not an add-on

Have you seen it approached like this? What is the result?

Supporting students with SEND should be part of an inclusive approach to all pupils.

How is this a different approach?

We must **know** and **understand** our students in order to **identify** the very **specific** barriers to learning they face and then put in place **strategies** to **enable all** students, including those with SEND, **to thrive**.

The 5 Recommendations

The five recommendations

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SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

Summary of recommendations

1
Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils, without exception

- An inclusive school removes barriers to learning and participation, provides an education that is appropriate to pupils' needs, and promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential for all pupils. Schools should:

- promote positive relationships, active engagement, and wellbeing for all pupils;

- ensure all pupils can access the best possible teaching; and

- adopt a positive and proactive approach to behaviour, as described in the EEF's Improving Behaviour in Schools guidance report.

2
Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs

- Schools should aim to understand individual pupil's learning needs using the graduated approach of the 'assess, plan, do, review' approach.

- Assessment should be regular and purposeful rather than a one-off event, and should seek input from parents and carers as well as the pupil themselves and specialist professionals.

- Teachers need to feel empowered and trusted to use the information they collect to make a decision about the next steps for teaching that child.

3
Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching

- To a great extent, good teaching for pupils with SEND is good teaching for all.

- Searching for a 'magic bullet' can distract teachers from the powerful strategies they often already possess.

- The research suggests a group of teaching strategies that teachers should consider emphasising for pupils with SEND. Teachers should develop a repertoire of these strategies they can use flexibly in response to the needs of all pupils.
  — flexible grouping;
  — cognitive and metacognitive strategies;
  — explicit instruction;
  — using technology to support pupils with SEND; and
  — scaffolding.

4
Complement high quality teaching with carefully selected small-group and one-to-one interventions

- Small-group and one-to-one interventions can be a powerful tool but must be used carefully. Ineffective use of interventions can create a barrier to the inclusion of pupils with SEND.

- High quality teaching should reduce the need for extra support, but it is likely that some pupils will require high quality, structured, targeted interventions to make progress.

- The intensity of intervention (from universal to targeted to specialist) should increase with need.

- Interventions should be carefully targeted through identification and assessment of need.

- Interventions should be applied using the principles of effective implementation described in the EEF's guidance report *Putting Evidence to Work: A School's Guide to Implementation*.

5
Work effectively with teaching assistants

- Effective deployment of teaching assistants (TAs) is critical. School leaders should pay careful attention to the roles of TAs and ensure they have a positive impact on pupils with SEND.

- TAs should supplement, not replace, teaching from the classroom teacher.

- The EEF's guidance report *Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants* provides detailed recommendations.

Recommendation 1:
Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils without exception

An inclusive school removes barriers to learning and participation, provides an education that is appropriate to pupils' needs, and promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential for all pupils. Schools should:

- promote positive relationships, active engagement, and wellbeing for all pupils;
- ensure all pupils can access the best possible teaching; and
- adopt a positive and proactive approach to behaviour, as described in the EEF's Improving Behaviour in Schools guidance report.

Discussion

Maria is a headteacher in a new role in September. Her new school has a much higher number of students with special educational needs than her previous school and she knows that supporting these children is a priority.

Her first instinct is to speak to the SENCo and understand the interventions and additional support in place for pupils with SEND; however, she doesn't want to limit her attention to interventions and extras. How can she ensure inclusivity runs through every part of the school?

Discussion questions:

Who is responsible for creating an inclusive environment for all pupils?

'Good teaching for pupils with SEND is no different from good teaching full stop.' Do you agree?

In what ways might teachers adapt their interactions with pupils with SEND to best support them?

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Recommendation 2: Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs

Schools should aim to understand individual pupil's learning needs using the graduated approach of 'assess, plan, do, review'.

2

Understand the needs of the child - underpins

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SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

Summary of recommendations

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- Schools should aim to understand individual pupil's learning needs using the graduated approach of the 'assess, plan, do, review' approach.

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- Teachers need to feel empowered and trusted to use the information they collect to make a decision about the next steps for teaching that child.

3. Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching

- To a great extent, good teaching for pupils with SEND is good teaching for all.

- Searching for a 'magic bullet' can distract teachers from the powerful strategies they often already possess.

- The research suggests a group of teaching strategies that teachers should consider emphasising for pupils with SEND. Teachers should develop a repertoire of these strategies they can use flexibly in response to the needs of all pupils.

  — flexible grouping;

  — cognitive and metacognitive strategies;

  — explicit instruction;

  — using technology to support pupils with SEND; and

  — scaffolding.

4. Complement high quality teaching with carefully selected small-group and one-to-one interventions

- Small-group and one-to-one interventions can be a powerful tool but must be used carefully. Ineffective use of interventions can create a barrier to the inclusion of pupils with SEND.

- High quality teaching should reduce the need for extra support, but it is likely that some pupils will require high quality, structured, targeted interventions to make progress.

- The intensity of intervention (from universal to targeted to specialist) should increase with need.
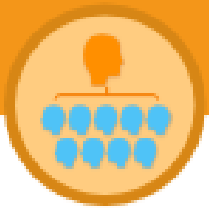
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2

Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs

- Schools should aim to understand individual pupil's learning needs using the graduated approach of the 'assess, plan, do, review' approach.

- Assessment should be regular and purposeful rather than a one-off event, and should seek input from parents and carers as well as the pupil themselves and specialist professionals.

- Teachers need to feel empowered and trusted to use the information they collect to make a decision about the next steps for teaching that child.

Discussion

2 **Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs**

Mark is preparing to welcome his class for the year. It is a class with diverse needs: some of the pupils have an autism diagnosis, others have a speech and language difficulty, and there is one pupil with moderate learning difficulties.

Mark knows that some of his pupils will need additional support but is unsure how to interpret the general information he has in order to meet their individual needs effectively. He has looked at the guidance provided centrally by the school SENCo but is struggling to convert this knowledge into practical steps.

Discussion questions:

How might the diagnostic labels of some pupils alter approaches to teaching?

How should schools build a holistic picture of learning needs for pupils with SEND?

Who should be consulted when assessing learning needs, within the school and beyond?

The graduated approach: assess, plan, do, review

- ❑ Evidence from studies in America showed that their approach (a graduated assessment approach called 'response to intervention') had a positive impact on academic outcomes for pupils with SEND
- ❑ Structured process of formative assessment is a sound logic model for identifying, and then addressing, learning needs
- ❑ Process needs to be regular as pupils' development is not linear
- ❑ If progress is not sufficient, further measures should be considered

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The graduated approach: assess, plan, do, review

Guidance report links to this approach throughout
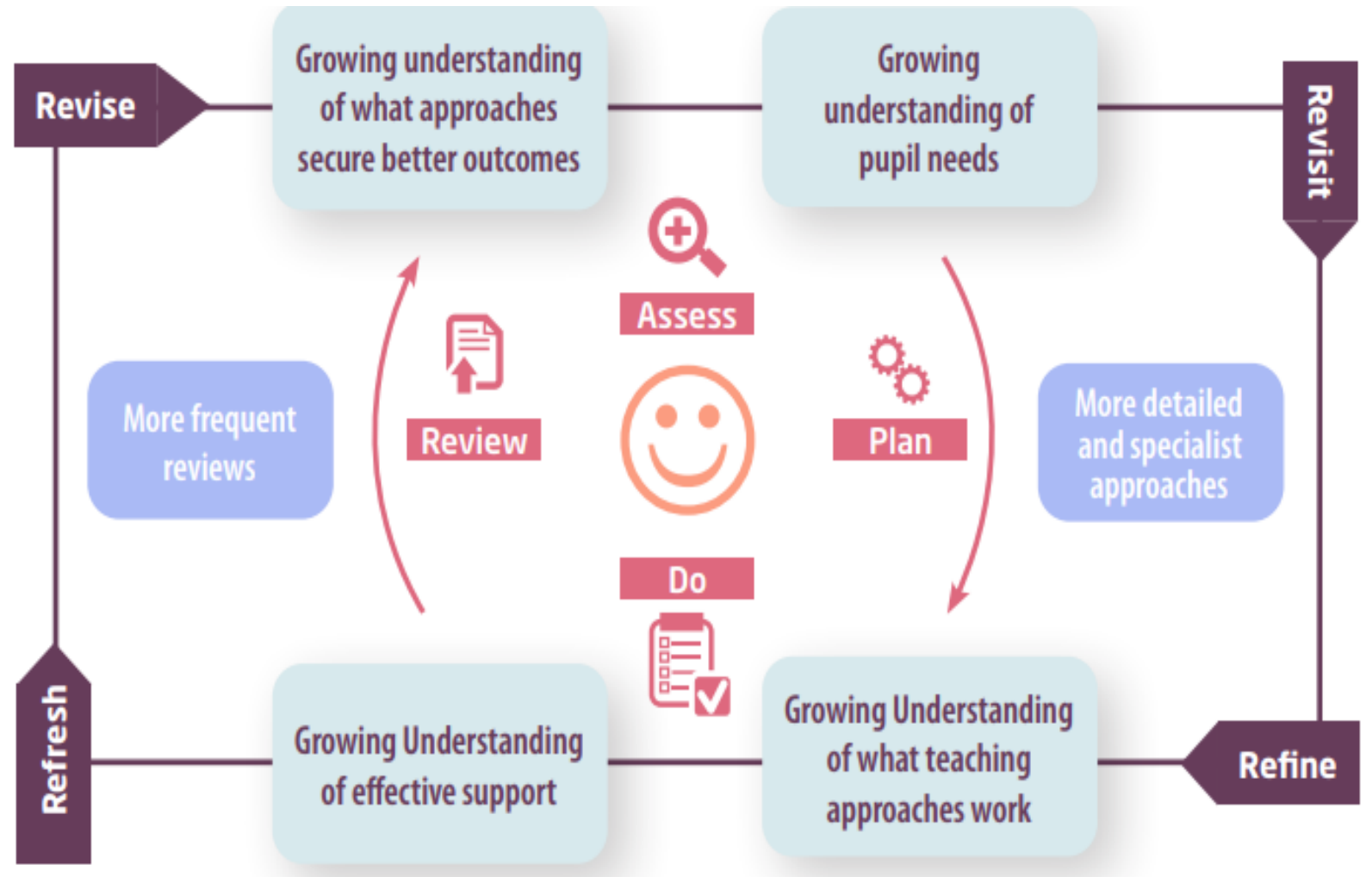
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Recommendation 3: Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching

To a great extend, good teaching for pupils with SEND is good teaching for all.

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3

Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching

- To a great extent, good teaching for pupils with SEND is good teaching for all.
- Searching for a 'magic bullet' can distract teachers from the powerful strategies they often already possess.
- The research suggests a group of teaching strategies that teachers should consider emphasising for pupils with SEND. Teachers should develop a repertoire of these strategies they can use flexibly in response to the needs of all pupils.
  —flexible grouping;
  —cognitive and metacognitive strategies;
  —explicit instruction;
  —using technology to support pupils with SEND; and
  —scaffolding.

- Small-group and one-to-one interventions can be a powerful tool but must be used carefully. Ineffective use of interventions can create a barrier to the inclusion of pupils with SEND.
- High quality teaching should reduce the need for extra support, but it is likely that some pupils will require high quality, structured, targeted interventions to make progress.
- The intensity of intervention (from universal to targeted to specialist) should increase with need.
- Interventions should be carefully targeted through identification and assessment of need.
- Interventions should be applied using the principles of effective implementation described in the EEF's guidance on Implementation.

A tiered approach

Specialist

Targeted

Whole-class

Specialist support. In addition to 'good teaching for pupils with SEN is good teaching for all,' some pupils will need specialist intervention delivered by a trained professional.

Targeted interventions. If pupils require additional support beyond what can be offered in whole class teaching, a targeted, one-to-one or small-group intervention could provide the intensive focus required for the pupil to make progress. More guidance on effective implementation of targeted interventions is provided below.

Whole-class teaching. If it appears that a pupil needs additional support, the starting point should be the consideration of the classroom teaching they receive. Have you maximised their opportunity to access the best possible teaching you can offer?

Recommendation 5: Work effectively with teaching assistants

5

Work effectively with teaching assistants

- Effective deployment of teaching assistants (TAs) is critical. School leaders should pay careful attention to the roles of TAs and ensure they have a positive impact on pupils with SEND.

- TAs should supplement, not replace, teaching from the classroom teacher.

- The EEF's guidance report Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants provides detailed recommendations.

Sign posting…

Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants—Recommendations

1. TAs should not be used as an informal teaching resource for low-attaining pupils.

2. Use TAs to add value to what teachers do, not to replace them.

3. Use TAs to help pupils develop independent learning skills and manage their own learning.

4. Ensure TAs are fully prepared for their role in the classroom.

5. Use TAs to deliver high quality one-to-one and small group support using structured interventions.

6. Adopt evidence-based interventions to support TAs in their small-group and one-to-one instruction.

7. Ensure explicit connections are made between learning from everyday classroom teaching and structured interventions.

MAKING BEST USE OF TEACHING ASSISANTS
Guidance Report

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Scaffolding framework

Self-scaffolding

Prompting

Clueing

Modelling

Correcting

More help from TA

Greater pupil independence
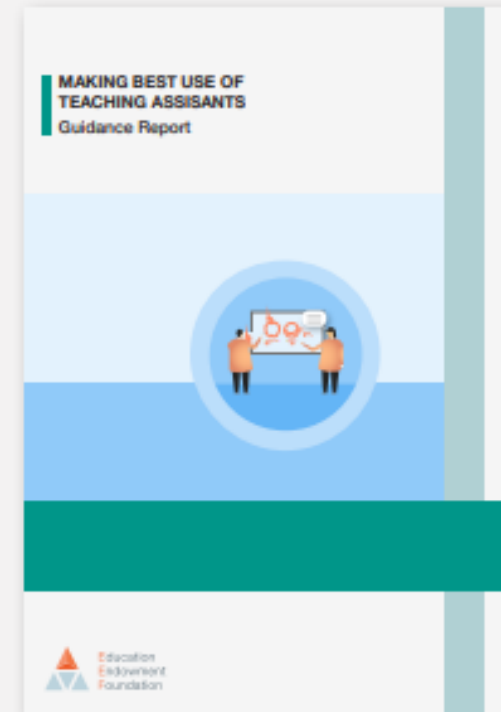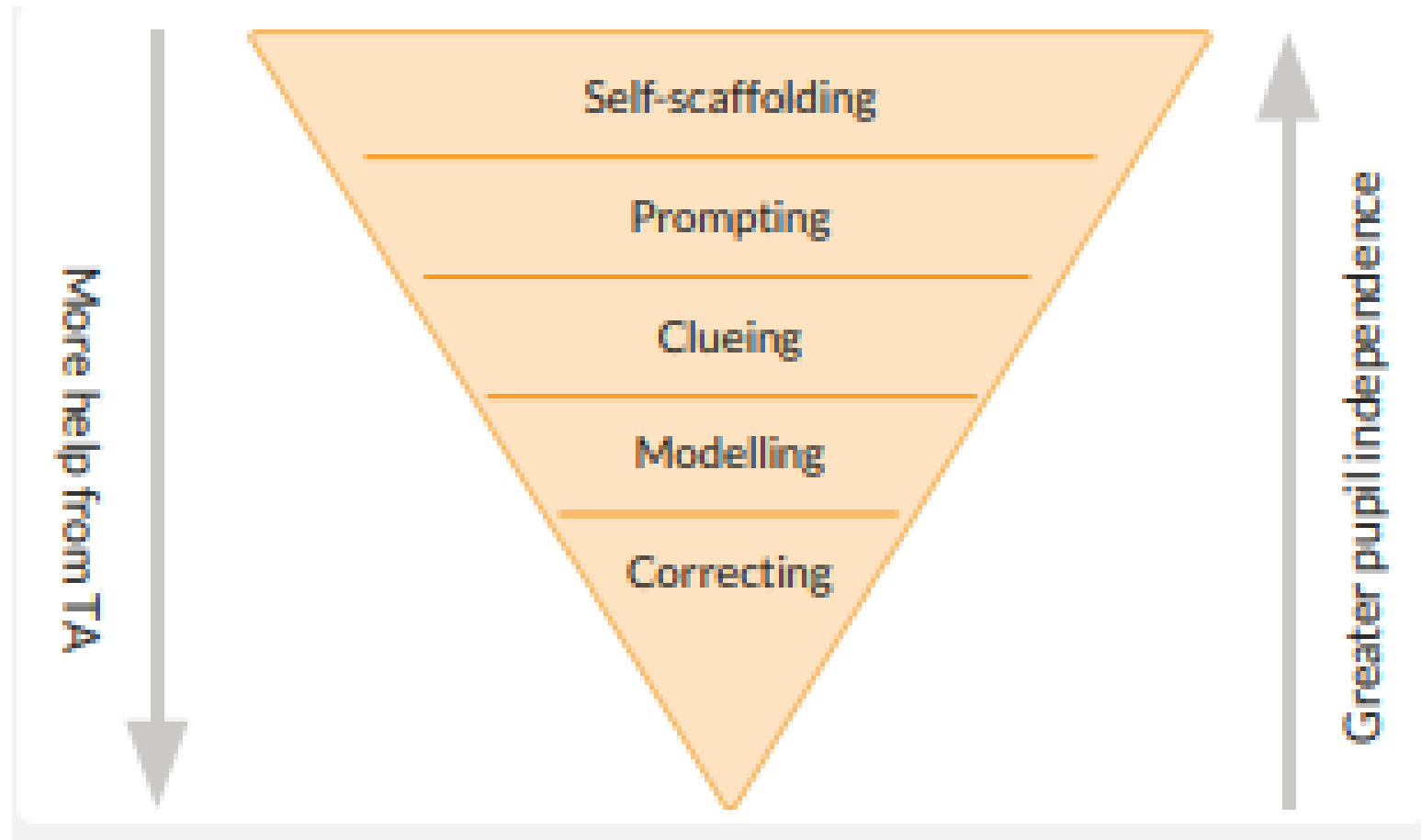
Practical Ideas

The Five-a-day Principle

1 **Explicit instruction**

Teacher-led approaches with a focus on clear explanations, modelling and frequent checks for understanding. This is then followed by guided practice, before independent practice.
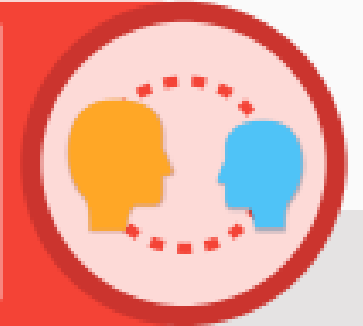
2 **Cognitive and metacognitive strategies**

Managing cognitive load is crucial if new content is to be transferred into students' long-term memory. Provide opportunities for students to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning.
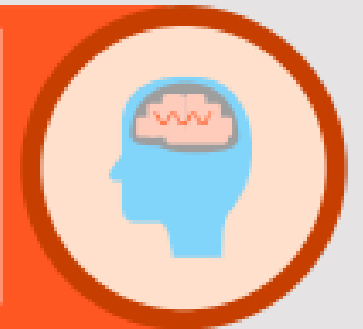
3 **Scaffolding**

When students are working on a written task, provide a supportive tool or resource such as a writing frame or a partially completed example. Aim to provide less support of this nature throughout the course of the lesson, week or term.
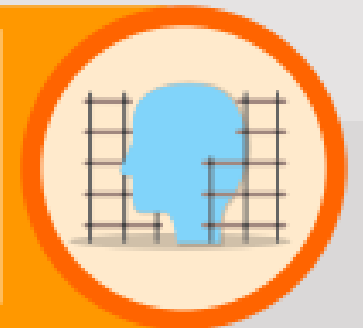
The Five-a-day Principle

4 **Flexible grouping**

Allocate groups temporarily, based on current level of mastery. This could, for example, be a group that comes together to get some additional spelling instruction based on current need, before re-joining the main class.

5 **Using technology**

Technology can be used by a teacher to model worked examples; it can be used by a student to help them to learn, to practice and to record their learning. For instance, you might use a class visualiser to share students' work or to jointly rework an incorrect model.
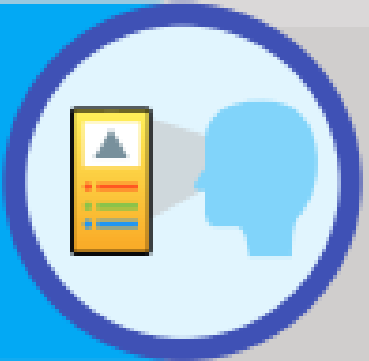
To what extend do you…

1	**Explicit instruction**	…use clear and succinct language in my teaching, checking pupils' understanding frequently?
		…help pupils to organise their thinking by 'chunking' the content and introducing new material in small steps?
		…model how to complete a task before expecting pupils to work independently?

To what extend do you…
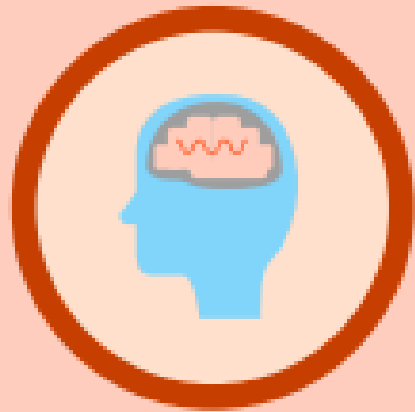
2	**Cognitive and metacognitive strategies**	…support all pupils to recall previously learned content, before moving on to new content?
		…support pupils to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning?
		…model the selection of metacognitive strategies e.g. using checklists to monitor their progress?

To what extend do you…

3

Scaffolding

…provide scaffolds (visual, verbal and oral) that allow all pupils to access the learning?

…use scaffolding in a way that reduces pupils' reliance on adult support? Do I reduce my scaffolding for pupils over time?

…provide scaffolds in a non-stigmatising way *(for instance, providing them at the whole-class level, allowing students to opt-in to a scaffold for a particular task)?*

To what extend do you…

4 **Flexible grouping**

…group pupils in a way that reduces stigma, ensuring such groups are based on the relative difficulty of curriculum content, rather than being fixed and inflexible?

…promote peer tutoring, placing my pupils in groups in which they learn from one another?

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To what extent do you…

5 **Using technology**

...utilise technology such as a visualiser when modelling work for pupils?

...utilise technology to support the clear modelling of work for pupils (e.g. using a visualiser)?

Implementation

Guidance Report

**PUTTING EVIDENCE TO WORK:
A SCHOOL'S GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTATION**
Guidance Report
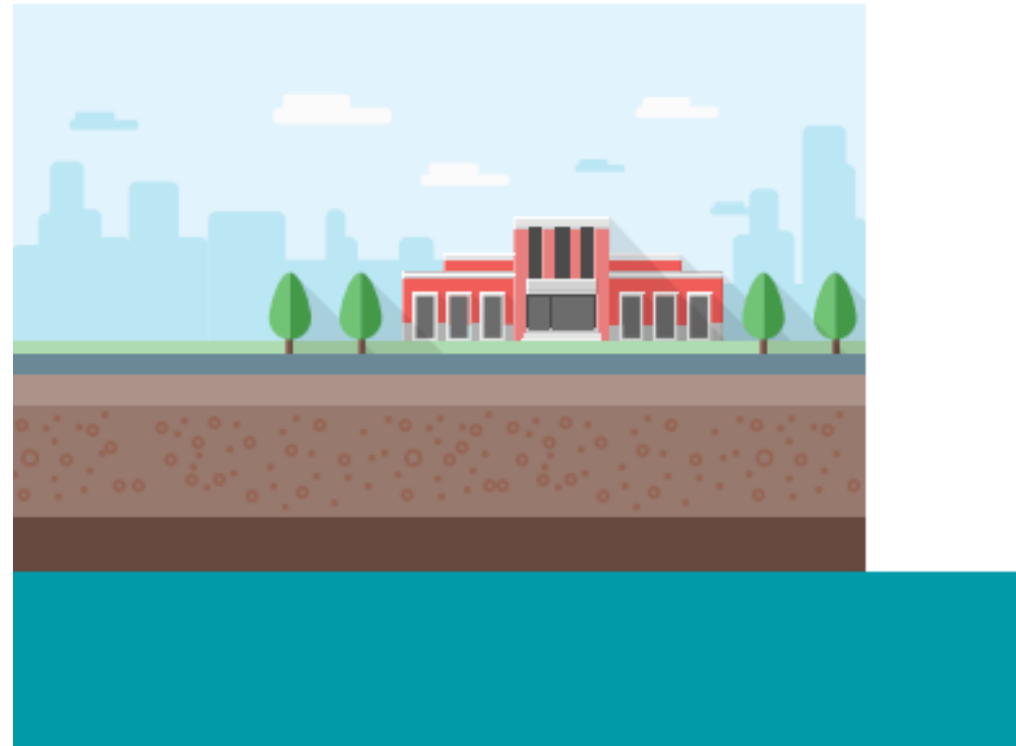
The importance of effective implementation

Implementation starts with selecting priorities: doing fewer things well.

"It doesn't matter how great an educational idea or intervention is in principle; what really matters is how it manifests itself in the day-to-day work of people in schools."

Dylan Wiliam

Discussion

What challenges can you see in communicating these recommendations in your school?

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS
Four common SEND misconceptions

Key Questions for Leaders

	EEF guidance recommendation	Questions for reflection
1.	Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils, without exception.	• In considering the most prevalent area of need in your school – e.g. communication and interaction - does your SEND provision address this? • How do you promote positive relationships, active engagement and well-being for all pupils including for those pupils with SEND and their parents ? • Are materials on paper and online accessible to all? What materials in particular do you refer to – give examples.
2.	Build ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs.	• What percentage of pupils are on the SEND register in your school and how does this compare to local and national averages? • What is the process for a child to be placed on the SEND register? • What are teachers' attitudes and approaches towards pupils with SEND? • How does your school interpret and implement the graduated approach of assess, plan, do, review? How is this communicated between the pupil and their families and teachers in school? • How is support from specialist professionals accessed and monitored?
3.	Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching.	• Is your SENCo a member of the leadership team and what is the purpose of their role in that team? • How frequently is SEND on the agenda of SLT meetings? • How does the SENCo meaningfully input in to teaching and learning decisions in school? *Continued…*

	EEF guidance recommendation	Questions for reflection
		• How consistent is high-quality teaching across the school? • What staff training is required? (Strategies to emphasise for pupils with SEND might include: flexible grouping, cognitive and metacognitive strategies, explicit instruction, use of technology and scaffolding.)
4.	Complement high-quality teaching with carefully selected small-group and one-to-one interventions.	• What SEND provision is in place within your school/ MAT? • What small group and one-to-one provision is in place? • What is in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of this provision? Are the interventions high quality, structured and targeted? • How do you monitor unintended consequences such as interventions becoming a barrier to inclusion?
5.	Work effectively with teaching assistants (TAs).	• How much of your SEND provision is delivered by highly skilled and qualified teachers? • How much of this provision is delivered by TAs? • How do TAs supplement (not replace) the classroom teacher? • How is TA deployment reviewed each year? • How are TAs involved in training and development in school?

Reflection and next steps

3 What are your **3 key takeaways** from today?

2 What **2 actions** will you take to ensure evidence for pupils with SEND is integrated into teaching and learning in your school/partnership – not a 'bolt on'?

1 Which **1 person** will you speak to about this in school?

Takeaways for further reading

What Really Works in Special and Inclusive Education? David Mitchell and Dean Sutherland (updated March 2020, Routledge)

EEF SEND evidence Review
https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Send/EEF_SEND_Evidence_Review.pdf

Statistics: special educational needs (SEN)
Statistics on pupils with SEN, including information on educational attainment, destinations, absence, exclusions, and characteristics.
https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-special-educational-needs-sen

EEF Guidance reports: Implementation / Metacognition / Use of Teaching Assistants

Questions