

Helping a Child with a Hearing Impairment in your Primary School

Hearing impaired pupils cover the whole range of ability. Hearing impairment “is not a learning disability” and a hearing impaired pupil has “the potential to attain and achieve the same as any other pupil given the right support and access to the curriculum.”

(Supporting the achievement of deaf children in primary schools – NDCS)

To ensure that a hearing impaired pupil is fully included in all aspects of school life, the primary school should:

- understand the needs of hearing impaired pupils
- ensure that the physical environment is optimal
- remove barriers to learning so that the curriculum is accessible
- provide a language rich environment
- make sure any hearing technology used is working to maximum potential
- Know where to go for further information and advice

Hearing impaired pupils will experience difficulty in accessing learning if there is a lot of background noise competing with the voice of the teacher – simple modifications within the classroom can make a difference.

Adaptations to create a good listening environment

- Use lots of soft furnishings such as cushions, rugs, play mats – REC/KS1
- Fitting blinds/curtains & carpets help to reduce background noise
- Soften any hard surfaces e.g. using table cloths/fabric on side tables/cupboard tops.
- Wall displays on notice boards – display drapes on walls
- Putting rubber tips on bottom of chairs and table legs
- Padding the bases & insides of pencil/pen holders, storage boxes, trays with fabric/foam/felt
- Use baskets for storage where applicable

Reducing background noise

- Close doors to block out internal noise from other areas and corridors
- Close windows to external noise if appropriate
- Be mindful of the noise from heating & air conditioning systems and ensure hearing impaired pupil is not sat near them
- Turn off IT equipment/smartboards when not in use
- Use classroom strategies that establish a quiet working atmosphere within the classroom
- Help other pupil's understand the impact of loud noises on a hearing impaired pupil's listening e.g. scraping chairs, tapping pens/pencils – promote quiet areas for specific activities

Using visual support to support access to the curriculum & language development

**Inclusive Education Service – Sensory, Physical, Medical Team
Advisory Support Teacher for Hearing:-**

Hearing impaired pupils cannot just rely on listening and speech/lipreading for information. They benefit from visual support to give context to a subject or situation particularly if it has just been introduced.

Visual support:

- Real objects, pictures, diagrams, artefacts, photographs, illustrations
- Story sacks & song bags – Rec/KS1
- Permanent vocabulary record, glossary, vocabulary mind-maps, word banks
- Age appropriate picture dictionary
- Use display work to consolidate and develop understanding
- Visual timetable
- Powerpoint presentations using visual images to support spoken explanation
- Use subtitles, if appropriate to pupils' ability
- Allow pupil time to switch attention between the speaker and the visual support

Supporting communication & access to the curriculum

- Ensure hearing aids & radio aids (if used) are worn and working at all times
- Ensure the pupil is sitting at or near to the front with good sightline to the teacher & smartboard.
- Make sure the room is well lit
- Don't sit/stand with your back to a window
- Make sure you have the pupil's attention before talking
- Be face to face with the pupil
- Speak clearly at your normal level & pace.
- Check the pupil understands instructions and key information, repeating and rephrasing if needed.
- Be mindful when watching audio-visual clips that spoken instructions & explanations are given before any lights are dimmed.
- Repeat or paraphrase comments & questions from other pupils in class

Phonics and hearing impaired children

- Hearing impaired pupils face particular challenges when learning phonics even when technology and the acoustic environment are favourable.
- These challenges are related to the nature of speech and the individual speech sounds
- Phonics guidance for the teaching of phonics to deaf children in mainstream schools is available in the following booklet :-
 - **Teaching phonics to deaf children: Guidance for teachers** available from www.ndcs.org.uk

Useful Websites

www.ndcs.org.uk The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) provides support for families, deaf children and young people and professionals working with deaf children. They have lots of resources and guidance to help you support the hearing impaired child in your class, in particular "**Supporting the achievement of deaf children in primary schools** - For teachers of children with hearing impairment"