

Strategies for Supporting Children with SEND during RE Lessons

Holy Trinity C of E Primary School

Strategies for supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs and

Disabilities in RE lessons

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| **Here is how we will help** | |
| **Cognition & Learning** | |
| **Cognition & Learning Difficulties** | * keep sentences and written instructions short and simple to read; * use pastel shades of paper (cream is a good alternative to white); * avoid black text on a white background and light text on a dark background; * use bold text for titles, sub-headings, or to draw attention to important information, or key vocabulary; * Help the child to learn and understand any specific vocabulary. This may be done visually, practically and/or during a pre-teach session to build the child’s confidence before the lesson; * The child may prefer it if an adult (or supportive peer) reads through   questions with them;   * Carefully consider working pairings/small groups. Support the child with   managing peer relationships effectively by providing a positive work  ‘buddy’;   * Provide a word bank, with key vocabulary for the topic/area being studied; * Provide key words with pictures/symbols to help with the child’s   memory;   * Keep PowerPoints slides simple and uncluttered. Highlight key information. |
| **Dyspraxia** | * Provide space for the child to work in. This will allow the child room to move and remain active when completing a task. They may also prefer to stand when handling any equipment/physical resources. * Provide part-prepared handouts to reduce unnecessary writing and lists of key concepts; or vocabulary; * Consider alternatives to writing- word processors, Dictaphones, scribe etc.; * Allow extra time to complete work, with movement breaks when   needed;   * Allow time to settle, especially if the lesson is after a breaktime/ lunchtime, as transitions may be challenging. |
| **Communication & Interaction** | |
| **Autism Spectrum Disorder** | A child with ASD may find RE a particular challenging curriculum area, however, using some of these strategies may help provide the environment for them to feel safe and secure in order to access the activities:   * Take time to build a good, trusting relationship with the child. This will also help adults understand the most appropriate way to respond to any   behaviour, at a given time; |

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|  | * Ask the child where they would prefer to sit in the classroom. Avoid changing this seating plan without plenty of warning, as this could cause anxiety. Think carefully about who is sat near to the child, as they may feel uncomfortable around certain children who may be a ‘trigger’ for them; * When planning group work, ask the child who they would prefer to work with, or offer the chance to work by themselves (or with their TA). Ensure that groups/pairs are carefully planned to provide supportive/positive role models; * Use visuals and structured tasks, incorporating the child’s own interests   wherever possible. Find out which ones work and use them all of the time,  even if it doesn’t seem that the child needs them. |
| **Speech, Language + Communication Needs** | * Provide plenty of opportunities for the child to communicate in a small group (they will be less confident working in a big group and will be less involved); * Provide opportunities for silent discussion activities; * Carefully consider any pairings or groupings and include good   communication role models for the child to copy;   * Listen carefully to what the child says, so that they don’t need to repeat   themselves;   * Provide a low distraction/quiet area for the child’s group/pair to work so   they can focus on their communication;   * Regularly check understanding and encourage the child to identify what   they can/cannot understand.   * Use signs, symbols and visual timetables to support communication; * Use visual displays (objects and pictures) that can be used to support   understanding;   * Provide a visual guide to the lesson, e.g. a check list, or pictures to aid understanding. * Provide plenty of repetition (activities and vocabulary); * Use non-verbal clues to back up what you are saying e.g.: gesture; * Ensure adults are providing a clear language model and expand what the child says, by repeating their words back to them correctly, without pointing out their errors; * Reduce the number of questions you ask and make sure you give time to   answer;   * If you do need to ask questions in front of the class, try to use closed   questions, as these require only a ‘yes’/’no’ answer, which will reduce  anxiety. |
| **Social, Emotional & Mental Health** | |
| **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder** | * Ensure a non-confrontational approach will help the child to self- regulate and reduce any anxiety and arousal; * Ensure any rules are consistently implemented and reinforced, * Consider seating arrangements to minimise distractions (e.g. at the end of a row, or the back of the classroom). Paired working, or support from a positive role model may help the child to focus. They may also struggle to work in a group, so paired seating may be preferable. * Allow a calming-down period before the lesson starts, especially if it follows a breaktime/lunchtime, as transition points may be difficult for the child to manage. * A timer will provide a focus for the child’s attention, enabling them to complete a task. |

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|  | * A ‘stress ball’, or other fiddle object (agreed by the SENCO) may help   with concentration.  Teaching methods to consider:   * Ensure instructions are delivered clearly, concisely and step by step,   child to repeat them back, or have them written on a prompt sheet.   * Provide a mix of activities to suit a range of learning styles, especially including kinaesthetic activities. With this in mind, plan in time-limited learning/ sensory breaks to allow for the release of excess energy. (An active ‘job’ might be useful strategy to break up the lesson. * Use subtle, visual pre-agreed cues, to remind the children of tasks. |
| **Anxiety** | Classroom environment/set up   * There are many types of anxiety and these will often accompany many areas of SEND. Ensure that you are familiar with the cause of anxiety for the particular child and how these manifests, bearing in mind that sometimes there may be no outward signs at all. Knowing the child really well will help with this. This is especially important in a subject such as RE, which often involves discussing feelings, thoughts, memories, families and, sometimes, sensitive issues. * Let the children know before the lesson if the usual seating plan is due to change during the activity. Carefully plan groupings/pairings and be aware of who the child feels most comfortable with sitting next to and having them support them with their work. * Ensure the child is prepared and knows what to expect prior to the   lesson;  Resources and equipment you might consider before the lesson:   * Consider the use of a ‘help’ card, which the child can use if they feel   anxious/overwhelmed, so that they can go somewhere they feel safe to  calm down. |
| **Adverse Childhood Experiences** | Classroom environment/set up:   * Ensure you are very familiar with the child’s past experiences and   context, as this will help you understand their behaviour;   * Ensure all classroom adults take a non-confrontational, trauma-informed approach. A discreet, understanding and reassuring approach from all classroom adults is vital; * Provide a safe, consistent and warm classroom environment. Incorporate as many opportunities for humour and laughter in lessons as possible (as laughter reduces the traumatic response in the brain); * Ensure the school day has clear expectations for behaviour and structure, as this will help provide a predictable environment, necessary for the child to feel secure enough to participate and access the learning; * Classroom adults need to be emotionally available and able to support and coach the child in ways to calm themselves and manage emotions, as well as opportunities to practise de-escalating when they feel overwhelmed; * Ensure adults are vigilant to and mindful of any trigger points for the   child, as this will help de-escalate emotional situations;   * Very carefully check through the lesson content prior to the session and look at it through the eyes of the child’s context and background. There may be obvious trigger points that can be planned for and managed prior to the lesson, with some elements needing to be avoided. Equally, there   may be trigger points in the lesson, which may not be so clear from the |

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|  | outside. Ensure that the classroom environment, available adults and overall support for the child is strongly in place should this arise.  Resources and equipment you might consider before the lesson:   * Provide a safe and familiar breakout space for the child to use during times when they feel overwhelmed or emotionally dysregulated. The child may also need access to a space to exercise, so that they can have regular   learning/ sensory breaks. |
| **Sensory & Physical** | |
| **Hearing Impairment** | Classroom environment/set up:   * Discreetly check that the child is wearing a hearing aid (if applicable) and frequently check-in with the child that they are hearing and understanding; * Be aware of seating arrangements to suit the child’s specific needs, for example if they are reliant on lip reading etc (ie seated towards the front of the classroom with an unobstructed view, or with their good ear facing outwards into the classroom); * Ensure that any background noise is minimised and control class/group   discussions, so that only one person is speaking at once; Resources and equipment you might consider before the lesson:   * Ensure any videos/films used are captioned, or a suitable alternative   way is provided;   * Provide any important information/instructions about the lesson in writing, as well as verbally. In addition, provide (in a written format) any lists of subject-specific vocabulary and technical terms;   Teaching methods to consider:   * Repeat clearly any questions asked by other students in class before   giving a response;   * Assist with lip reading by doing the following: - ensure your face is clearly visible at all times when speaking and sitting directly opposite the child whenever possible; - seating the child so that they can see others in the class (where possible); - ensuring the lighting is adjusted so that it is not too dark; - providing written materials for all lessons, so that the child   is not having to lip read and take notes from the whiteboard. |
| **Visual Impairment** | Classroom environment/set up:   * Keep your classroom visually uncluttered and reduce the number of objects in the immediate working area; * Be mindful of seating arrangements and discuss any preferences with the child. For example, they may prefer to work at close distances, (such as sitting closer to the board), or move the object closer to them, (such as people getting closer when talking); * Be aware of the specific circumstances of the child, for example: * If they are sensitive to light and glare, control the light in the classroom using blinds, sit the child with their back to windows and reduce the glare on surfaces; * The child may need to be seated near natural light, where possible; * The child may need to use a lamp, which should be places behind their shoulder on the opposite side to their writing hand and/or on the same side of their stronger eye; * High contrast objects/pictures may be beneficial. As best practice on handouts/presentations, black & white give the highest contrast. |

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|  | * Warn the child of changes in lighting, as this can cause extreme eye   strain and headaches.  Resources and equipment you might consider before the lesson:   * Provide enlarged/magnified pictures, images, maps and print. The VI team will have assessed the child’s vision and recommended a font size and typeface to use. The SENCO will advise on this. Be wary that simply enlarging worksheets on a photocopier makes the letters, or edges of diagrams lose their sharpness and reduces the contrast. Please ensure resources are produced in the correct font size and type-face for the child to access.   Teaching methods to consider:   * Allow the child to take a break from their work, as this enables them to   be visually focused for shorter periods of time and prevents fatigue;   * Allow more time when visually exploring a material and when   completing a visually challenging task. |
| **Sensory** | * Be mindful of sensory processing difficulties and ensure the learning   environment is neither over, or under, stimulating for the child;   * Allow the child to have sensory breaks if needed; * Allow the use of fiddle toys in class. The child may also prefer to sit on a gym ball/wobble cushion/special seat to provide sensory feedback and help them self-regulate and focus. |

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