

section

4



## Section 4 Additional Guidance on Inclusion

### Inclusion

The National Curriculum handbook for Key Stages 3 and 4 contains in its introduction a statutory statement on inclusion, which sets out guidance for teachers on the provision of effective learning opportunities for all pupils. Three principles are established as essential to the development of an inclusive curriculum:

#### 1. Setting suitable learning challenges

Setting suitable learning challenges means the teaching of knowledge, skills and understanding in ways which maintain high expectations whilst also meeting the abilities and learning needs of the pupils.

This may entail reference to the *Framework for teaching English* objectives from an earlier or later year group and, in the case of pupils working significantly below age-related expectations, the use of programmes of study as a resource for planning appropriate learning experiences.

#### 2. Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs

To respond to pupils' diverse learning needs, schools must provide an environment for learning which secures opportunities for all pupils to achieve, and recognises the differing interests, experiences and strengths which will influence their learning.

In order to respond to the diverse needs of pupils, teachers are required to:

- create effective learning environments, i.e. those within which pupils will feel secure and that their contributions are valued;
- secure motivation and concentration, e.g. by varying content and presentation to match learning needs, e.g. presenting work related to cultural experience, setting appropriate challenges for those whose ability, interest and understanding are in advance of their language skills;
- provide equality of opportunity through teaching approaches, e.g. *by facilitating access by the use of appropriate supports, aids or intervention*
- use appropriate assessment approaches;
- set targets for learning.

### 3. Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils

To overcome potential barriers, schools must recognise and address particular learning and assessment requirements.

Three broad groups of pupils are described:

#### 1. Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Curriculum planning and assessment for pupils with special educational needs must take account of the type and extent of the difficulty experienced by the pupil. Teachers will encounter a wide range of pupils with special educational needs, some of whom will also have disabilities. In many cases, the needs of the individual will be met through greater differentiation of tasks and materials. A smaller number of pupils may need access to specialist equipment and approaches or to alternative or adapted activities. This may be augmented by advice and support from external specialists as described in the SEN Code of Practice, or, in exceptional circumstances, with a statement of special educational need.

#### 2. Pupils with disabilities

Not all pupils with disabilities will have special educational needs. Many pupils with disabilities learn alongside their peers with little need for additional resources beyond the aids which they use for everyday life, such as a wheelchair, a hearing aid or equipment to aid vision. Teachers must take action in their planning to ensure that these pupils are enabled to participate as fully and effectively as possible within the National Curriculum and the statutory assessment arrangements. Potential areas of difficulty should be identified and addressed at the outset of work, without recourse to the formal provisions for disapplication.

#### 3. Pupils who are learning English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Pupils for whom English is an additional language have diverse needs in terms of the support necessary in English language learning. Planning should take account of such factors as the pupil's age, length of time in this country, previous educational experience and skills in other languages. Careful monitoring of each pupil's progress in the acquisition of English language skills and of subject knowledge and understanding will be necessary to confirm that no learning difficulties are present.

The ability of such pupils to take part in the National Curriculum may be ahead of their communication skills in English. Teachers should plan learning opportunities to help them develop their English and participate in all subjects.

This additional guidance provides general advice on provision for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.

## Including pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Literacy is the key to achievement in all subjects. Every pupil is entitled to our highest expectations, and the opportunity of a challenging curriculum. The government is committed to challenging every child to achieve the best possible progress, no matter how far behind or ahead of their peers they lie.

The Green Paper 'Excellence for all Children' acknowledged that pupils defined as having special educational needs may be educated in a range of settings including mainstream schools, units attached to mainstream schools, pupil referral units or some combination of these. Some pupils may receive home tuition or be taught whilst in hospital.

The National Curriculum 2000, in its 'General Teaching Requirements' sets out statutory expectations for the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities. This guidance offers advice on the teaching of literacy skills to a variety of pupils, who may fall within the following broad categories:

### Progress units

A large and important group of pupils face relatively minor difficulties in learning, reflected in attainment of levels of literacy below those expected at entry to Year 7. Pupils in this group may have been disadvantaged by factors associated with background or schooling. Some have had significant gaps in their education because they missed school, or experienced temporary hearing, physical, visual or emotional problems; others have had poor teaching at an earlier stage, or have been moved to a number of different schools. For these pupils, the Key Stage 3 National Strategy offers the opportunity to catch up.

The *Framework for teaching English* specifies the revisiting of unlearnt skills, and the forthcoming catch-up units for level 3 offer fast and focused attention to persistent difficulties. Crucially, the recommended teaching approaches, with their fast-paced, highly-focused and explicit teaching strategies will accelerate their progress. It is anticipated that teachers will differentiate the work and provide suitable support in English lessons for this group of pupils so that they can progress along with their peers. For pupils working at level 3 a set of Progress Units is provided for use in additional time or in lessons where this is appropriate. The units cover: Writing Organisation, Information Retrieval, Spelling, Reading Between the Lines, Phonics and Sentences.

## Pupils with disabilities

There is another smaller group of pupils who are capable learners but who need special provision to access the curriculum. Some need to use signs, symbols, Braille, radio microphones or electronic communicators. Others need to use ICT to assist them with recording or reading their work.

Although they often need time to become proficient with aids, to operate them at lesson speed, complete tasks and respond in lessons, expectations should remain high, and energy focused on maximum access and independent learning. Support for these pupils should generally take place within the mainstream classroom, tackling objectives suitable to their age group.

Cleo attends a mainstream secondary school. Each year group is divided into two bands and she is in the upper band. She has a specific learning difficulty. She is very articulate and able to generate very good ideas within her writing. However, she has significant problems in recording her work. She is reluctant to put pen to paper although she is often prepared to describe her ideas orally. She has a laptop but does not always have it when she needs it. There are no additional adults in the class to help with scribing the work. The teacher uses a range of strategies to overcome the writing difficulties that are particularly acute when extended writing is necessary. The department has a computer, which will take speech recognition software, and Cleo has been trained to use this. She also uses a tape recorder to tape her thoughts and they are typed and given to her on disc to amend and redraft. Sometimes she works with another pupil and they produce a piece of joint work. A target in her Individual Education Plan (IEP) is to write one page independently each week. Cleo has one lesson per week with a special needs teacher. These lessons are planned with the class teacher to ensure that they coincide with a lesson when pupils are undertaking a piece of extended writing and take place in the English classroom. One piece of work has to be handwritten for each module and that is usually completed during the lesson with a special needs teacher.

James attends a mainstream secondary school and is taught in a mixed-ability Y7 class for English. He uses a Braille machine and needs appropriate printing and other ICT devices, including a talking dictionary and thesaurus. In most respects he can work independently with the rest of the class. The teacher also ensures that key learning points are repeated at the end of a whole-class session discussion and again at the end of the lesson. This benefits a number of pupils who have difficulty in recording or retaining key facts.

James has one English lesson a week with a specialist teacher who ensures that he has understood the key learning points from the previous week's work. She plans this lesson with the class teacher to coincide with a time when pupils are involved in independent writing tasks. Sometimes she works with James in the class and is able to advise on any additional strategies that are necessary. A learning support assistant is given the texts for the current module of work and he prepares a Braille version prior to the lesson. James is unable to interpret the visual cues that are necessary to understand the subtlety of pupils' views about characters and text. During these times, the teacher ensures his friend Sam describes quietly the visual clues to assist his understanding. For example, in a discussion about a character that uses 'an evil look' to intimidate someone, a pupil may make a face that describes this. Sam explains this to James.

### Pupils who are out of step – i.e. working well below national expectations for their age group.

Another group of pupils will be working well below national expectations at levels 1 or 2, and teachers will recognise a need to adapt their teaching and modify their objectives. Teachers need to consider each of the objectives for the work in hand, and decide which ones are appropriate for these pupils, and which are not. Where they are appropriate, they should be taught. The main task is to decide what kind of differentiation strategy will support them. However, it may be the case that part or all of an objective is unsuitable because vital foundation skills are missing. In the first place, teachers could consider if the objective can be simplified. The National Literacy Strategy *Framework for teaching for Year Reception–Year 6* is a useful resource for finding progressive objectives leading up to the challenges of Year 7.

Jason in Year 7 will find it difficult to manage the objective Y7 Sn 5:

‘Keep tense usage consistent, and manage shifts of tense so that meaning is clear to the reader.’

His teacher judges that he could achieve: ‘Use tense consistently.’

For groupwork time, she arranges a group of three children for whom this is also a suitable objective, and helps them to go over a recent piece of written work, amending the underlined verbs to a consistent tense.

This is a Guided Writing group, which she will revisit over the next few weeks. She sets the simplified objective as a group target.

Sometimes the objective cannot be simplified because the pupil lacks the underpinning skills or pre-requisite knowledge. In this case, it is appropriate to cast back for foundation objectives on which to build. For example, a pupil might need to do foundation work on phonics rather than investigating more advanced spelling rules. To succeed, pupils may need extra time, a helper, or a programme of additional support materials.

Such support might be deployed during English time if the planning allows. Additional adults, for example, can be effectively deployed when other pupils are also pursuing independent work. Another alternative is to commit extra curriculum time to allow additional teaching. This has the benefit of allowing pupils time in the lesson to consolidate the work in hand: it is not in their interests to miss out on the important work that goes on at this point in the lesson.

A school’s capacity to provide parallel sessions depends on the availability of staff, the deployment of the Special Needs department and the organisation of the curriculum. In general, support should be organised around working in the English classroom with peers, and additional time used to tackle vital skills that cannot be accommodated in the lesson. Care must be taken to be realistic about the timing and extent of the additional work; pupils working at level 1 and 2 are entitled to a full and rich curriculum. Literacy should liberate them in the other subjects, and not deny them access. Each child is a different case, and provision should reflect their profile of needs.

The Department for Education and Employment is developing a set of foundation units aimed at particular skills, which are commonly needed by pupils below level 2. Even where pupils have achieved a particular competence in literacy, they may not be able to transfer those skills across all subjects. They need help to apply their literacy skills to subject materials and in a range of contexts.

### Pupils working significantly below age-related expectations

Another group of pupils are working pre-level 1 for the majority of their secondary education.

'For pupils whose attainments fall significantly below the expected levels at a particular key stage, a much greater degree of differentiation will be necessary. In these circumstances, teachers may need to use the programmes of study as a resource or to provide a context, in planning learning appropriate to the age and the requirements of their pupils.'

*Inclusion statement, National Curriculum 2000.*

Challenging targets for these pupils may be found in the earliest stages of the primary *Framework for teaching* and addressed in the context of the Key Stage 3 curriculum.

Mrs Hillier teaches a class of eight pupils working between P level 2 and level 1. They are all Key Stage 3 pupils. She works closely with a neighbouring secondary school. She has chosen to work on extracts from *Hiawatha* as a pre-1914 poem. She plans so that pupils at the lowest level are exploring and responding to rhythms whilst the more able pupils also work identifying initial letter sounds and recognising high-frequency words from the text. Some also use symbols to write their own poems.

The pupils perform their poems and in doing so, explore the events of the poem in role (Y7 S and L 15 – a key objective). At the end of the unit of work the class will perform extracts from *Hiawatha* together with pupils from the secondary school.

For pupils working at the 'P' levels for most of their school lives, communication skills should be taught daily, and developed towards early literacy in small steps. Pupils will benefit from the experience of shared activities based on texts, group oral work, a shared reading and communicating through images, ICT and drama. All these experiences contribute to growing literacy.

### Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties

Many pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties have poor literacy skills as a result of their inability to maintain concentration and persevere with tasks. When this group is given work which is pitched at too low a level, they become demotivated and disaffected. The *Framework for teaching English* will ensure high expectations of their learning and offer structured lessons where the expectations and routines are well established.

The four-part lesson structure provides pace and routine. Pupils who have difficulties in concentrating have more opportunities to change activities and maintain interest and motivation. Teachers should invest time in establishing routines of work in the lesson, particularly at the transition between one activity and another. Plenaries at the end of the lesson can be used to review behaviour as well as their work.

### Pupils with communication difficulties

Pupils with communication difficulties face particular challenges in literacy. The emphasis should be on enabling their progress through clear, effective teaching, which builds confidence and participation. Pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders do require well-structured lessons with clear routines and predictable parts. Experience in primary schools suggests that they work best when teaching is explicit and challenges are direct and well-focused. Some pupils with speech and language impairments have no other developmental difficulties and English lessons provide the opportunity to work alongside peers, practising and discovering strategies to overcome their difficulties.

### Individual Education Plans (IEP)

An IEP should include one or two short-term literacy objectives if pupils have difficulties related to language. It is helpful if these objectives are drawn from the *Framework for teaching English*. Teachers should evaluate pupils' progress towards the expected outcomes regularly and check that the targets are sufficiently challenging and broken down into appropriately small steps. If necessary, targets can be taken from the primary *Framework for teaching*.

Some pupils may need time outside English lessons to work on the objectives but they should also have many opportunities within English. Members of the English team should work closely with the SENCO to ensure that any additional support, or particular intervention provided is identified within a pupil's IEP. The English team should also contribute to evaluating pupils' progress in relation to literacy-focused IEP targets.

### Roles and responsibilities

Where there is additional adult support for pupils within English lessons, the roles and responsibilities of the adults should be clearly understood. The aim is still to enable pupils to participate as independently as possible. The support should not be seen as a substitute for careful thinking about appropriate teaching strategies for including everyone in the lesson.

The success of this strategy depends on good working relationships between the English Department and the special needs department. The staff should work together to clarify roles and ensure that the skills and resources available from those staff are used effectively to support pupils, particularly in developing their reading and writing. Where members of the special needs

department teach English to certain groups, care must be taken to ensure these pupils have access to the full English programme of study. The school's senior managers should plan and monitor the timetable carefully to get the best out of the staff resources available.

Many English departments and special needs departments will need to consider their timetabling arrangements in the light of this guidance. The withdrawal of pupils from English should be avoided because they need to maintain the development of their literacy skills along with the rest of the class. More than most, they need to consolidate new learning as well as addressing unlearnt skills.

## Pupils learning English as an Additional Language (EAL)

The inclusion of pupils learning EAL is a fundamental principle articulated in the National Curriculum 2000. It sets out statutory expectations for their inclusion. The NLS objectives and teaching and learning approaches provide a focus on clear, unambiguous objectives in ways which engage pupils in active learning.

The *Framework for teaching English* provides for planned progression in language skills, understanding and competence. It encompasses the ability to recognise, understand, use and manipulate the conventions of both oral and written language. Revision and consolidation objectives enable pupils to revisit insecure areas of learning while continuing to develop other aspects of language with which they are confident.

Clear learning objectives will support pupils learning EAL when they are used in a context that builds on prior attainment, and when pupils are fully aware of the substance and purpose of the work. Furthermore, the delivery of objectives through teaching which is highly interactive and discursive, and which allows for participative whole-class and group work, will help pupils learning EAL, especially if teachers take full account of their specific needs.

This guidance offers general support to mainstream and specialist teachers and language support staff and will be useful to those responsible for the management of literacy at whole-school level.

### Inclusive teaching of pupils learning EAL

A broad and varied population of pupils learn EAL. Some will be literate in other languages, some will be learning to speak English as well as to read and write in English, and others will be able to hold conversations in English but will need help to use and apply it across the curriculum. Some may not need extra provision, and others may need specific support with specialist or colloquial vocabulary. They will need strategies for accessing text and differentiated or alternative outcomes to tasks. It is important

that all their teachers have information about their educational history and their literacy skills in their first language, as these will be significant factors to their progress in learning English. This information is vital in planning how best to teach these pupils and in assessing their progress within all subjects.

Mohammed is a pupil in Y7 whose oral expression is sophisticated. He is able to retell a narrative text with great understanding and attention to detail as well as to explain and illustrate the meaning of a pun to the rest of the class. His oral response in all subject areas shows evidence of good levels of understanding, but he finds it difficult to express his thoughts and ideas in open-ended written exercises. Mohammed's teachers have found that he can clearly articulate his knowledge and understanding in written form when provided with a supportive framework for teaching English. Visual aids such as photographs and questions, which guide his thinking, enable him to demonstrate a more realistic view of his knowledge.

Pupils who enter KS3 with little or no English will need particular support and guidance. However, experience from the NLS in primary schools has clearly signalled the benefits of including beginner learners of EAL and newly-arrived pupils in whole-class and small-group activities from the earliest possible stages. Where additional specialist language support staff are available they can provide advice on inclusive strategies, work with teachers to monitor progress, and where appropriate or practicable, give individual support within the whole-class setting.

'...the language of the mainstream classroom does offer the best context for learning language, because bilingual pupils are learning English for the purpose of learning the language being taught and not in the abstract. Because group activities involve discussion, pupils can learn by listening to other pupils and by relating the discussion to what they see happening. They learn language in context which is how language is most effectively learnt.'

Heilbronn, R and Jones, C (Eds)

*New Teachers in an Urban Comprehensive School*

Trentham, 1997

Effective teaching strategies for the inclusive teaching of pupils learning EAL include an emphasis on oral language through:

- carefully planned and structured teacher talk;
- ensuring pupils have ample opportunities to listen to well-spoken, standard English and to engage in activities before being asked to make a spoken or written response;
- developing pupils' spoken standard English through activities in which they are required to listen to, and engage in, extended talk, in settings where their efforts can be supported and developed (e.g. through collaborative work in small groups);
- making links between spoken and written English which clarify explicitly the similarities and differences.

'At present classrooms are rather like crowded swimming pools. Those who are competent dive in. Some take things slowly and concentrate on improving their style and performance, while others are there for a good time and do not mind making waves that disturb others. Those who are less competent may try to get in but are quickly discouraged and remain on the edges. Those who are learning have little support from the others and stand timidly on the sides waiting for the right time to enter. Sometimes they might dip their toes in but most often they walk away without getting wet. Rather than pushing people in or leaving them to fend for themselves, the situation needs to be organised so that everyone gets the opportunity to develop their skills and enjoy themselves without hindering the progress of others. I would therefore make the following proposals:

- all teachers need to be aware of how talk is used in class; by teachers themselves and by different groups of pupils;
- all teachers need to monitor the talk of their pupils and aim to improve the oral skills of all pupils in a range of styles and contexts;
- all teachers should set up ground rules for talk. There should be 'zero tolerance' of peer hostility;
- all teachers should use structured, planned talk as a learning tool linked to other activities including reading and writing;
- talk activities should happen regularly and be evaluated rigorously;
- there is a need to overcome the attitude prevalent among pupils that talk does not count as real work.'

*Head of school EAL department praised by OFSTED in 1999*

**In English lessons**, pupils learning EAL will benefit from the text-focused language and literacy work as well as from the demonstration, modelling and investigation of language structures and functions in the context of the reading and writing of formal styles of English. The *Framework for teaching English* provides for detailed progression through its planned increase in skills, understanding and language competence in a range of text types and contexts.

Where teaching is well matched to their needs, pupils learning EAL will derive great benefit from focused literacy teaching, because:

- it promotes explicit attention to language learning;
- pupils have opportunities to hear English spoken often and distinctly, to speak to the teacher and to each other, and to develop knowledge about language and language use within a shared and familiar context;
- class teaching provides pupils with helpful models of spoken English in real contexts;
- group work provides opportunities for intensive and focused teaching matched to learning needs.

**In all subject lessons**, pupils learning EAL will need support in accessing the particular language of classroom texts through the use of inclusive teaching strategies and meaningful activities.

'Pupils learning EAL will not have the same range and experience of English language in context as native speakers. They will need to learn about the cultural references in texts to enable them to understand the meaning. They will require support in understanding:

- inferential language and allusions embedded in texts;
- differential meanings of words in context;
- constructions used in particular genres;
- metaphorical use of language;
- culturally embedded language;
- use of dialect forms.'

*Naldic Literacy Papers: Provision in Literacy Hours for  
Pupils Learning English as an Additional Language*  
Naldic, 1998

A range of supportive teaching strategies which focus on the relationship between subject content and language demands will assist pupils learning EAL to develop their English language skills in context. These strategies include:

- provision for visual support in order to enable pupils to conceptualise information and learning tasks when their knowledge of the subject language may be limited. This involves the use of a range of devices, for example objects, illustrations, labels, diagrams, use of video or computer graphics, provision of writing frames and grids;
- provision for pre-reading of texts where pupils can be introduced to key vocabulary and phrases and discuss the main ideas. This may, where appropriate and manageable, include the use of first language;
- provision for oral 'rehearsal' of written tasks in order to focus pupils' attention on the language required;
- probing understanding through targeted questioning and discussion;
- extending active reading tasks, e.g. DARTS, by reworking the ideas in their own words.

Teachers from the science and humanities faculties, working with a highly-skilled language support teacher, set out to revise several units of work so that developing bilingual pupils would be better able to understand and participate in the work of the class. They chose units on 'Migration' (geography), 'Islamic Civilisation' (history) and 'Living Things' and 'Cells and Reproduction' (science), and the starting point was the textbook in use, as much money had been invested in it.

The project took the EXIT (Exeter University) model of working with texts: activating prior knowledge; establishing purposes; locating information; adopting an appropriate strategy; interacting with text; monitoring understanding; making a record; evaluating information; assisting memory; communicating information. It looked at each of the stages within each unit of work and identified activities that could be developed through activities such as labelling diagrams (specialist vocabulary given), matching notes to pictures and using grids to extract and organise information.

The grids were particularly useful in helping pupils to focus on the main ideas in a text. When they come to produce a fuller response, they find they have all the information they need to support this in the grids. Grids are valuable for encouraging active reading of texts, and the extraction and classification of information. Even able pupils can miss detail and this strategy helps them to focus carefully on the messages. For developing bilinguals it provides the support they need.

The history and science teachers in this school outlined the major outcomes of these new teaching strategies:

1. EAL pupils more able to access work.
2. End-of-unit tests rewritten to include items bilinguals could attempt.
3. Existing worksheets unpacked or rewritten.
4. Learning tasks staged more carefully.
5. Content covered well and activities more engaging (i.e. more fun) for pupils.
6. Scientific learning improved.
7. Attainment levels raised in history.
8. Greater confidence with using different texts and extracting meaning (previously most pupils tended to copy blindly whereas with these strategies the reformulation of information is required).

Reported in the *HMI Survey of Literacy at KS3*

### The role of language support staff

The role of specialist or language support staff will inevitably vary according to circumstances. However, it is essential that mainstream staff benefit from their expertise in order to provide an inclusive learning environment for pupils learning EAL, whether they are isolated learners or part of a larger group within a school.

For schools with few pupils learning EAL, support from specialist staff may be geographically remote, but the objectives can provide the focus for liaison. EAL specialists will have a clear sense of the language demands upon pupils both within English lessons and across the curriculum. Planning documentation can be annotated by specialist staff to indicate the specific language support required and to suggest appropriate teaching interventions.

Where specialist staff are available within the school itself, it is essential that they act in an advisory role as well as leading whole-class sessions or providing individual or small-group support to particular pupils. The recent OFSTED report *Raising the Attainment of Minority Ethnic Pupils*, (1999) noted that the most effective work by EAL staff involved a clear curriculum focus and a strong ethos of partnership between EAL and mainstream staff. This is well illustrated by the following extract from the report, based upon case study material from an effective school:

'The focus of the work is curriculum development. Support is focused in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science together with other language-rich subjects such as humanities and R.E. Departments have to bid in for support, making clear their commitment to the work and the nature of development required. The maths department, for example, has noted that EAL pupils find the language of investigative writing difficult, so the Section 11 team and maths department have written a new scheme together.'

*Raising the attainment of Minority Ethnic Pupils*

OFSTED, 1999

Where EAL teaching and support staff are available within lessons, they will play a crucial role in the provision of advice and resources.

### The place of languages other than English

Pupils learning EAL who are already literate in another language and understand principles of phonology, spelling and grammatical conventions in that language will be able to bring that knowledge to bear when acquiring literacy skills in English. Pupils need to develop speaking and listening skills in order to develop literacy skills. However, literacy skills also help pupils to develop speaking and listening skills.

Pupils learning EAL need to hear good examples of spoken English and also to refer to their first language skills to aid new learning in all subjects of the curriculum. The use of the first language enables pupils to draw on existing subject knowledge and to develop English language skills in context. For example, a group of pupils can learn about paragraph organisation in their mother tongue.

## Supporting and challenging gifted and talented pupils

The National Strategy for Key Stage 3 offers a good opportunity for thinking again about how to offer suitable programmes of work for gifted and talented pupils. Like other pupils, they are entitled to opportunities, support and challenges that will help them to reach their potential.

Able pupils are taught in a range of groupings: some are set and some are taught in mixed-ability classes and some are vertically grouped. Whatever setting is used by the school, able pupils will display a range of talents, including diverse reading experiences, wide-ranging interests and an astonishing array of capabilities.

Teachers can meet some of these needs by differentiating tasks, offering personal support, targeting higher order questions, building in challenging open-ended tasks, and directing supplementary study outside the lesson. In addition, some schools use mentors, and many schools provide a responsibility post to cater for this group. The focus of this guidance is on the way teachers can stimulate and direct the able reader or writer in everyday lessons.

### Identification of more able language users

Whatever the ability profile of the school, teachers should be alert to the presence of gifted and talented pupils. The important issue for schools and English departments is not to quibble about the labels, but be aware of the strong likelihood of a group of more able pupils in each school year, and provide the best curriculum programmes to meet their needs. Not all of these pupils will be regarded as talented across the whole range of school subjects, but any demonstrating linguistic attainment well in advance of those of the same age group should be given proper attention. Be aware, too, that ability can be hidden, for example, among second language learners, shy pupils and those with special educational needs.

Being more able in regard to language and literacy skills usually refers to that small group of pupils, who enter secondary school each year:

- capable of demonstrating close reading skills and attention to detail;
- aware of the nuances of language;
- as fluent and confident readers, with defined tastes, and engrossed in reading;
- with developing incisive critical responses, demonstrating greater pleasure and involvement in language tasks than most other pupils;
- having developed the ability to read between the lines, and to make good connections across texts and within texts;
- usually able to articulate their intentions and choices in writing;
- recognising the intentions of other writers;
- most importantly – able to reflect more carefully on the sorts of language and linguistic engagements they are encountering.

Not all able pupils will demonstrate equal capabilities in all aspects of English. A great reader may not be as skilled in writing, for example, and many able pupils find safety from an anti-intellectual culture in silence. They may not all be reading ‘harder’ books, or writing accurate lengthy pieces of writing. Success may come in the form of penetrating wit, divergent thinking, delight in language or in-depth response, for example. Stereotypes should be avoided in the search for ability.

Identification of gifted and talented pupils is not an exact science. Its difficulties are increased as such pupils might not be immediately recognisable at the time of transfer to the secondary school, but only begin to display their abilities at a later stage. Particular texts, a motivating teacher, or other stimulating factors can all contribute to more able pupils discovering a medium to practise fully their latent talents. Teachers, therefore, need to be looking out for more able pupils through the key stage.

The identification of gifted and talented language users can only be possible in a school or departmental context where pupils are being provided with opportunities to exercise the sorts of interactions with texts which allow them to demonstrate their advanced skills. If pupils do not enjoy chances to show their mettle, then they will never be properly recognised for their capabilities, however able they might be. Attending to the needs of more able pupils often has the effect of causing teachers to analyse more carefully the needs of all pupils.

For LEAs and schools that are implementing the gifted and talented strand of Excellence in Cities, the Framework should provide support for their wider strategy to improve the education of gifted and talented pupils.

### Developing gifted and talented readers and writers

Improving pupils' reading capabilities can be achieved if we provide the teaching and opportunity to:

- raise a repertoire of questions to put to texts as a way of preparing for a fuller reading;
- engage with texts, and seek meaning beyond the literal;
- develop skills of prediction at all stages of reading;
- make comparisons with other texts;
- consider the patterns in and structuring of texts;
- seeking degrees and levels of meaning(s);
- analyse literary effects and features of style;
- make judgements about the level of success, enjoyment, interest, or fitness for purpose of the text;
- explore what others may have made of the same text;
- explore related texts.

Similarly, gifted and talented writers make faster progress if teachers set out to identify, plan for and promote the following characteristics of the writing process:

- being absolutely clear about the purpose(s) of any writing;
- exploring in detail and agreeing the needs of the audience of the writing;
- rehearsing and discussing the characteristics of the text type or genre of writing being attempted, basing much writing on texts previously read and studied;
- setting up procedures for gaining feedback, then checking and rewriting work at the drafting stage;
- practising ways of making confident decisions about choices of language to underpin clear and intended meaning;
- writing occasional short, focused, intensively controlled pieces of text, with the ability to explain all its features;
- writing in a broad range of different contexts, including more challenging text types such as analysis, speculation and evaluation.

### What teachers can do in the classroom

To challenge able pupils in reading, teachers might invite them to:

- respond to challenging questions in shared reading, which will prompt them to probe deeper into the meaning of a text or explore ideas of greater sophistication;
- enhance their reading through
  - a parallel text of a similar kind, to seek for related characteristics;
  - a quite different text to identify important differences;
  - a text by the same author, to explore related/different themes, approaches etc.;
- predict and justify the likely development of the plot, characters, relationships and narrative focus;
- characterise and generalise about similar text or text types or genres;
- raise their own key questions about a text;
- research or read ahead and brief the class on aspects of the text, especially if the class is not reading the whole text;
- consider further themes than those studied by the class;
- recast short texts in a new style or perspective;
- reflect on their own reading processes, for example, in a journal;
- make comparisons between the written versions of texts and their interpretation into film, television, etc, and explore the nature of different media.

And in writing:

- reflect on their own planning and revision processes, explaining their organisational decisions and language choices;
- write to stringent and challenging specifications, e.g. for publication;
- extend, play with or subvert a genre or text type;
- experiment with alternative ways of developing a piece of writing;
- develop keyboarding skills to allow them to operate word-processing equipment efficiently;
- offer word-processing and ICT planning, drafting and presentational skills as often as possible for more able pupils to explore alternative approaches to constructing their writing tasks;
- make relationships with pupils of their own ability from other schools, possibly in other countries, through internet links; to share their work and, even, take part in joint construction.

It should always be possible to ask ‘What next?’ of any pupil’s writing, and gifted writers should always be asked how they might have enhanced any task before leaving it to move on to other topics.

Any English department discussing and developing the advice and suggestions contained within this section will not only be more carefully addressing the needs of its most able pupils, but also enriching the language learning possibilities for all its student population.