

Hidden Children – PaCC 2nd surgery session

Inclusion in schools: what does good practice look like for learners with SEND?

The first part of the online surgery, which took place in June, introduced the idea of inclusion. We looked at a presentation about Reasonable Adjustments which was provided by SENDIASS at Amaze. What we learned:

- A reasonable adjustment in education is a change that is made to remove or reduce a disadvantage faced by a SEND child or young person. The reasonable adjustment may be part of a wider support package or simply a small change that makes a positive difference to the child or young person's learning or access to activities and facilities in education and training. For example, a change to a policy e.g., flexibility with uniform policy for a child with sensory issues; changes to teaching e.g., visuals used to scaffold work; moving a class to the ground floor if upper rooms can't be accessed by wheelchair users or child allowed to leave class 5 minutes early to avoid crowded corridors
- The legal requirement for a reasonable adjustment was incorporated into The Equality Act 2010 (LINK [Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)). It established that schools, early years providers, post-16 institutions, local authorities and others must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that SEND children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers. Good to keep in mind that not all children and young people with SEND are covered by disability legislation but a good provider will consider making reasonable adjustments for any child or young person who needs them.
- Important to keep in mind that there isn't a legal definition of 'reasonable', so a provider does not have to make changes if they are too expensive, impact negatively on other children and young people, etc. 'Reasonable' for one provider may be 'unreasonable' for another.

A provider should anticipate the needs of children and young people, as for example knowing that many children and young people benefit from a timeout card, it should be easy to issue one to a new pupil.

Many reasonable adjustments have little or no cost, as for example teacher faces a deaf children or young person so they can lipread them or all children and young people must raise their hand during class discussions so that a Deaf person can see who is talking, and supports everyone to get a turn in the activity.

- If you think your child would benefit from a reasonable adjustment, talk to the SENCO or the Learning Support at your child's school; a good school will be used to making adjustments. Once the need has been identified, the child or young person, parent carers and the school should work together to identify what may be needed. It is important to know that you can request a reasonable adjustment, or a change to an existing one, at any time. Once the reasonable adjustment has been agreed, details of it should be added to the SEN Support Plan or to the Education Health Care plan (EHCP) so it is recorded and monitored, important to underline the fact that a child or young person does not need any plan in place to request or make adjustments.

During the second part of the session, parent carers attending the surgery were able to provide examples of what they thought inclusion looks like to them. Views included that inclusion means having access to full education, interventions, learning aids such as visuals, scaffolding support, timetables, sensory breaks. Parent carers felt that these inclusive practices would support all pupils, not just pupils with additional needs.

Other things parent carers said would help with inclusion included:

- Parent carers having more support and understanding of child or young person's profile
- For there to be more training for teachers about EHCPs
- A greater awareness and understanding around different additional needs/combined/multiple neurodivergent differences and how to best support a child or young person
- The importance of a very scaffolded support around the child, which could include one to one support
- A trusted key team to support the school for example BHISS, Local Authority case workers and so on
- A good, caring learning environment being one that combines small learning groups which are differentiated and targeted; a nurturing group taking place every day.
- The child or young person to be treated equally and not to be separated as punishment
- For pupils to be kept emotionally safe
- That children can find noise and light distressing due to their sensory processing difficulties
- Regular dialogue between parents and teachers as no one knows about the child or young person more than their parents; for parent carers to be included and for it to be remembered how important it is to coproduce and work together. Also and more communication between parents, the teachers and the school SENCO.

Primary to Secondary Transition:

Parent carers also mentioned that it's very hard to find information about transition from Primary to Secondary and information about schools in the city - parents have to contact each school SENCO to find out. Parents asked for updated information on the Brighton and Hove City Council Local Offer website, to support parents around transition. Some parents said that they have to wait until year 6 (not year 5) to visit the school and/or attend open days making impossible to find the most suitable school for their child in the timeframe they have.

A representative from PaCC attends the primary and the secondary SENCo forums and we know that transition, especially secondary transfer, has also been a recurring theme at those forums. At the summer term Secondary SENCO forum, the PaCC representative shared parent feedback that highlighted some of the difficulties parents face around choosing school placements and when the best time to visit is for schools. Transition will remain a priority focus at the SENCo forums next year, with the suggestion of possibly developing some further guidance, building on previous guidance to include expected/agreed protocols and good practice, which once finalised will be shared with parents/carers via various forums.

The feedback from this surgery have been passed on to the Local Authority, both within the education & skills and SEND departments. PaCC will continue listening to parent carers, to help create a positive difference for children and young people around their education. The next Hidden Children surgery will be in October; we will promote the session as wide as possible, with advance notice of when it will be.

