

## MARSHFIELDS HUB STRATEGY PROGRAMME

### Supporting Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) students with alternate ways of working (AWoW) in the classroom

**AIM:** To identify students that may need additional support to meet their Moderate Learning Need. To develop an inclusive teacher practice. To build an ethos of support within the classroom setting.

#### What is an MLD learner?

Children described as an MLD learner are those that have learning difficulties. They have a greater difficulty in acquiring basic number and literacy skills. They may have received increased help and support but still demonstrate difficulties with their learning. The difficulties affect all areas of learning. Developmental milestones will have been reached more slowly compared to their mainstream peer. There is often a speech and language delay, difficulty in concentrating and underdeveloped social and emotional skills.

Within the code of practice, MLD is described as a student who is working at or below the second percentile on an Educational Psychologist's assessment. This will mean a student is likely to be working at least 4 years behind their peers.

#### How does a teacher know they need AWoW?

A child with MLD can have difficulties mixing with their peer group, many are vulnerable. These children are often needy with an over reliance on adult help and support.

Things to look out for:

- Difficulty understanding basic concepts.
- Problems acquiring basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy, resulting in a lack of confidence in using and developing the skills they do have.
- A lack of logic.
- Poor problem-solving skills.
- An inability to generalise learning and apply it to new situations.
- Limited communication skills, coupled with immature social and emotional understanding.
- Poor fine and gross motor skills.
- Difficulty with personal organisation.
- Poor auditory/visual memory.
- Poor long and short-term memory; difficulty remembering what has been taught.
- Speech and language delay.
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Sensory impairment.
- A lack of social skills.

#### What are the options?

The child may already have an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or may require a referral in the absence of an EHCP. However, the first steps to supporting a child with MLD tendencies is:

#### First steps:

- Ensure the child has routine and structure in all lessons.
- Giving the young person responsibilities.
- Encourage praise and reward for all positive learning behaviors.

- Build on the child's knowledge and understanding in a staged approach. Give time for pre-learning and over-learning.
- Ensure Learning Objectives each lesson is realistic and achievable.

A few examples:

Observed Behaviour by Teacher	Cause (Child's view)	Effect (Child's view)	Teacher Action
Does not sit down in lesson.	Forgotten where to sit, another child in their seat.	Delayed learning, confusion, a trigger to confrontational behaviours.	Have books out on table, clearly displayed seating plan, as this child enters be at their desk to non-verbally show where to sit.
Does not copy the date, Title and Learning Objective when asked subsequently the rest of the class finish before the child has begun.	Writing is hard, organisation is hard, transitioning from last lesson to this is hard.	Child already behind in the first 5 minutes of the lesson - feeling of hopelessness.	Preprint these non-learning items for the child to glue into their book. This is a good opportunity for the child to look back at last lessons work and recall the prior lesson.
During project work students are asked to design a rain resistant playhouse. An introduction video is shown, and students requested to start their design. The Child leaves the room, refuses to engage.	The video went too fast, I could not understand the words.	I don't get it. I don't understand. And anyway, why are we designing playhouses?	Pre-teach this topic and its objectives prior to the rest of the class to give processing time of what is to come. Provide a scenario that is meaningful to the child. Provide concrete resources. Does this part of the topic need to be sketched? Or is there another way IE building a model?
During a game the child always refuses to take part and then proceeds to talk to others taking them off task.	I find it hard to sit for a long time and wait my turn. I won't be chosen anyway because nobody likes me.	I have not taken part several times, it must be ok to do my own thing.	Does this game need to be played if it excludes a child? Can the groups be made smaller, so more children get a turn quicker? Can the child struggling be given a responsibility/ job to do first before joining in (Through pre arrangement with the child). That way they watch and listen to how the game is to be played processing the rules.

### What teachers should do:

Plan and develop differentiated lesson. Thinking carefully about the level of learning, prior teaching, and next steps. Have the intended outcome in mind. Pace lessons so they are sequential. Develop classroom approaches that are multisensory. Use concrete resources and use of ICT as appropriate to develop participation in tasks and therefore develop learning. Decide how children will record their learning (written, oral, photographs, video, highlighting text, mind maps etc).

Children with MLD benefit from regular checking that they have understood the task or request. That their work is progressing in the right direction and having access to what the final product will look like. This may mean repetition of instruction, rephrasing, adding further explanation and demonstrating the steps in reaching the final product. MLD children respond well to 'now and next' language throughout their work.

### Resources that help:

- Concrete resources the child can touch and feel.
- Visuals that the child can refer to throughout the task.
- Models of the final product that the child is aiming towards.
- Checklists for the child so they can mark their progress throughout the task. Children like to finish. Plan in additional time to ensure the MLD child can finish their work.
- If the child has an EHCP follow the activities and use the resources listed.
- Language that is clear and instructions that are concise.
- No more than two options in their learning, negotiation will add further confusion and develop unhealthy learning behaviours.

### How can you assess impact:

It is important that when a child is struggling to access learning in the classroom that a differentiated approach is carefully developed. Following an Assess, Plan, Do and Review (<https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2018/05/21/assess-plan-do-review/>) sets out the teacher's intent, implementation and impact can then be recorded.



MAKING INTERVENTIONS WORK

Assess Plan Do Review Cycles

Pupil Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Assess:	Date:	Who:
Carry out child observations, hold discussions with key staff, parents/carers to identify & analyse needs e.g. IE 360*		
Any relevant assessments carried out by external agencies e.g. Health, EP, Social Care.		
Consider parent, pupil & staff questionnaires		
In- school screening assessments		

  

Do:	Date:	Who:
Implement the plan as agreed. Clearly show Who, What, When, How		
Continue to observe and record evidence of support and progress		



Plan:	Date:	Who:
Hold discussions & meet with parents, staff and any specialist services involved to plan for what needs to happen		
Ensure that the 'plan' is outcome focused e.g. improve, develop, achieve. Remember child and parents at the centre of the planning		
Outline interventions & support needed – Provision Map. Record expected impact on progress, development & behaviour		
Set time limits for interventions Set date for review		

  

Review:	Date:	Who:
Discuss with others e.g. SENCO, parents, colleagues, pupil about how effective the interventions have been and the impact on the pupil		
Analyse and compare data, observations and planned outcomes		
Think about next steps. Plan carefully with parents, other specialists and the pupil		
Does the APDR cycle need to begin again?		



It is likely that this cycle may need to be repeated.

Assessing impact is a record of the successes and developing next steps.

Consider:

- How much progress did the child make against targets set?
- How much support was needed?
- Was the teaching environment suitable? Are further adaptations required?
- Have any other in-school assessments taken place within this cycle? Has progress remained stable or improved? Which aspects have worked well? Devise the next steps.

Useful Links

- MLD  
[www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk](http://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk)
- Pre-Teaching  
<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/pre-teaching>
- Over learning  
<https://learningspy.co.uk/featured/should-students-be-overlearning/>
- Children with SEND  
<https://www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs/extra-SEN-help>
- The engagement model  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-engagement-model>

- Concrete Resources  
<https://newcastleearlycareerteachers.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/ect-resources-overview-concrete-materials-and-mathematics.pdf>
- Assess, Plan, Do, Review  
<https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2018/05/21/assess-plan-do-review/>