

Implementing Age Appropriate Continuous Provision in a SEND Setting

Summary and Recommendations of the Project

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Introduction

Overview of why I chose the project.

At the start of the project I had a mixed age year 5/6 class. I was beginning to find that more and more whole class lessons didn't work. Sometimes some children would refuse to do certain tasks. Disruption could stop the entire lesson. Some of the children had very short attention spans and were at a level where "Nursery type" play based learning would be beneficial; however others needed more structured lessons and could sustain concentration for much longer periods.

The composition of the class had a vast ability range, from P levels to Level 3. There was no single lesson that could cater for all of them. Sometimes during the course of a lesson, children with short attention spans would become disengaged and wander off. Re-engaging them, took adult support away from other children. I started to think about choosing activities that they could move on to, but was unhappy with the idea of "choosing" and felt that every activity needed to have a purpose and objectives.

Many children had anxieties about what the work would be, so would therefore disrupt every lesson introduction as a work avoidance tactic. This lengthened the time sat in front of the whiteboard; it wasted teaching time and resulted in other children, who had been sitting and listening for too long, becoming disengaged. I began to feel that lesson introductions were a waste of time and were mainly undertaken to tell staff what to do.

I also found that when whole class lessons were underway the support that staff gave to the children was not sufficient. Although there was only twelve children in the class with three adults; each member of staff, still had four children to teach. All children with SEND deserve a high level of appropriate support. I found that staff time was primarily focused on the lowest ability children who needed the most support, while the more able children ended up working independently. Although we strive to foster independence in all children, sometimes 1:1 support with a more able child can be meaningfully targeted and really address gaps in their learning.

I started to explore how to combine the continuous provision model for learning with a more structured approach, which was age appropriate. During the course of the year, I eventually developed a system where adult led mini-lessons or challenges took place within the class, alongside child led independent challenges, The children would complete all of the challenges on a rota basis.

Links to SIP 2017-18.

| Improvement Priority | What it looks like for Abbey School | How RP would feed into the objectives |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| Improvement Priority 1 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment | All teachers delivering at least good or above lessons through pupil based assessments and project based learning opportunities. | 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 |
| Improvement Priority 2 Leadership and Management | To apply inspirational, visionary and exceptionally strong leadership and governance through co-producing as successful visionary leaders at every level throughout the school. | 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 |
| Improvement Priority 3 Outcomes for pupils | Ensure the outcomes of pupils are relevant and personalised. | 3.1, 3.2 |
| Improvement Priority 4 Behaviour and safety | That the whole school community shares an active responsibility for keeping ourselves and others safe. | 4.1,4,3,4,4 |



Summary of the Project

I initially decided to stop teaching whole class lessons, as much as possible and trial a system of adult-led mini-lessons, combined with child-led independent tasks, I planned a range of lessons, as a series of age appropriate challenges, with learning objectives, and success criteria. The morning challenges were Maths or English based, while the afternoon challenges were based on other curriculum areas. The children would complete all of the challenges on a rota basis. A quick overview of the challenges was given on Monday, but no actual lesson introduction. At the start of each lesson the children chose what they wanted to do. They would complete all the challenges over the course of a week.

The adult led challenges would be, what had I had formally attempted to teach as whole class lessons. The three adults in the class would each lead one of these challenges, which were primarily skills based. Each adult worked with two children and would teach the necessary skills required before the children completed the task.

For example adult led challenges might include:-

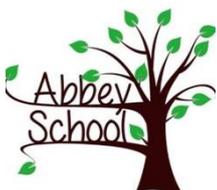
- Science challenge, involving an investigation and setting up a fair test.
- History challenge, comparing life in the past to life in the present.
- ICT challenge, involving developing skills to use a particular program.

The rest of the children completed independent challenges. These challenges were designed to practice previously taught skills, but also to be problem solving based or involve STEM. A WAGGOL would be used if necessary and sometimes a quick introduction was given by one of the adults before the child was left to complete the challenge independently.

For example independent challenges might include:-

- Lego challenge constructing a model and adding a circuit.
- DT challenge, Researching and building something using junk modelling materials.
- Ipad challenge, creating animations using assorted Apps.
- Polydron challenge, making and naming 3d shapes.
- Art challenge, sketching shells or other objects.

This trial proved to be successful. The children liked completing the challenges and were much more engaged for longer. If they finished one challenge, they had others to move onto. They liked being given some choice, over what they were learning and when they learned it. Children who had previously attempted to disrupt whole class lesson and or lesson introductions, no longer had the opportunity to do so. I often let such children choose what they wanted to do first, so that they would feel in control. They would then happily move on to another challenge each day. Children earned points for each challenge completed and an end of day reward, if they had completed all of the day's challenges.



Recommendation 1

All cohorts are different and we all teach in a very individual way. What has worked for me and my class may not work for others in the form that I use, but I would recommend that everyone reads the impact section of this project and move away from whole class lessons and trial developing their own way of delivering age appropriate continuous provision or some form of challenge based learning within their class.

I feel that my teaching practice has been transformed and that I am no longer running around the classroom “like a headless chicken,” trying to support as many children as possible.

Our children have all been unable to cope in main-stream settings, where predominantly whole class lessons are taught, so why teach in that way at Abbey, when we have so many talented staff, who are quite capable of leading lessons or mini lessons.

“It is very interesting that The Foundation Unit of many primary schools, where continuous provision is used are found to be outstanding by Ofsted, while the rest of their school are judged good or requires improvement.”¹



¹ Chris Quigley's Course handbook. Continuous Provision in years 1-6.

Recommendation 2

One thing that really helped me, before I started this project was attending a training course led by

Chris Quigley:- Continuous Provision in years 1-6.

This was a really good starting point and gave me many ideas about how to implement continuous provision with older children.

So a further recommendation would be that other teachers be allowed to attend this course or else Chris come into school to deliver a bespoke course with our children in mind.

<https://www.chrisquigley.co.uk/continuous-provision-years-1-6>



How the project has impacted on practice:

Better use of teacher and TA time.

Teacher and TA time is used extremely efficiently. Time isn't wasted supervising activities that can be completed independently such as Art. Teacher and TA time is rotated around all children equally and has given the children more individual attention.

Quality of teaching and learning improved

The quality of teaching and learning and questioning and answers is higher, because teacher and TA time is focused on only a few children at a time. As teaching is carried out more individually, target setting is more individualised and concentrates on filling gaps in learning and is linked to targets on Eazmag, PPAPs, ECHPs and Class Intervention Plans. More able children are equally supported compared to less able children, so can learn at an accelerated pace as their targets are addressed individually

Better behaviour

Lessons run more smoothly because there are very few whole class lesson introductions, or therefore opportunities to disrupt. The rotation of different challenges has been very successful. There is less arguing about completing work during lessons, as the children know that some elements of the lesson will involve choices. Children come into class and get on with their challenge. They understand that all challenges have to be completed over the course of a week and they will receive rewards for completing them. If anyone refuses to complete a task, for whatever reason; they don't disrupt the entire lesson, because everyone is getting on with what they are supposed to be doing, so there is no audience.

Children are more engaged

Children are more engaged in learning for longer. Children are more willing to engage during the time they are supported by the adult as they understand that they will be able to choose from more play based learning challenges later. During self-chosen independent challenges they are always engaged.

Encourages Independent learning, co-operation, fosters resilience and develops problem solving skills

Independent learning is undertaken daily by all children. The independent learning tasks allow children to practice previously learned skills, but also offer opportunities for perseverance, collaboration and reflection. Some of the independent challenges are problem solving based and encourage collaboration with children teaching each other and passing on skills. Since many of the challenges are not teacher led, some children naturally take the lead and show others what to do without being asked.

Elements of each lessons appeal to different learning styles.

Lessons consist of a range of different types of purposeful, age appropriate activities that appeal to different learning styles.



Next Steps

The next step for this project is to see the recommendations take place. Everyone should especially read and take note of the Impact and Recommendations sections of this report and see the benefits and then trial moving away from whole class lessons and developing their own way of delivering age appropriate continuous provision or some form of challenge based learning within their class.

For me personally the next step is to try and adapt what I have done this year to suit my next class, which is younger, lower ability and even more in need of play based learning. I don't feel that the independent challenges could be completely unsupervised with this class, so I have decided to trial two groups of adult led challenges, with two children in each group, in order to free up one adult to supervise and encourage, though not unduly lead, the children undertaking the independent challenges.



References

Chris Quigley's Course handbook. Continuous Provision in years 1-6.

