

# Creating a SEND friendly Classroom Environment for Yr R

*Early Years webinars: Session 1*

Delivered by Rachel Martin and Jules Wheeler



This webinar will be recorded so that it can be accessed for a limited time period only. Break out rooms and use of the chat box will not be recorded.

After the session delegates will be sent a link to the recording.

Please use the chat box if you have any questions or comments.

# Year R transition webinars

A series of webinars are going to be delivered over the next few weeks. These webinars have been designed to support mainstream schools prepare for the potential rise in pupils with SEND at mainstream this September. We hope that these webinars will prepare early years settings to plan for effective provision.

# Aims of the session

- To understand how to make a Yr R mainstream classroom environment more SEND friendly.
- To take away ideas to put into practice in your own classroom.
- To understand how the Engagement Model could be used in Year R.

Why is getting the classroom environment  
right so important?

“Imagine you are in a busy foreign railway station. You know you have to get somewhere but you’re not quite sure how to read the strange symbols that indicate the destination on your ticket. The signs are in a script that you don’t recognise, the trains are loud, noisy and smell strongly of diesel. The buzzing crowd is pushing and jostling you in a direction you’re not even sure you want to go. Some people come towards you making attempts to grab your bag, and you feel scared and threatened. Other people gesticulate with signs and mouth strange words, but you don’t understand and they soon go away. You spot what looks like an official and make your way to them, but they are just shouting random words in a language you don’t understand through a megaphone. Your head hurts, you are sick with anxiety and frustration and you have no idea how to cope.

School can feel like this for pupils with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC).”

**Lynn McCann – Reachout ASC**

# SEND Guidance Report – March 2020

## EEF – Education Endowment Foundation

*“It offers five evidence-based recommendations to support pupils with SEND, providing a starting point for schools to review their current approach and practical ideas they can implement.”*

**Recommendation 1: Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils, without exception.**

*“Creating a positive and supportive environment means placing support for pupils with SEND at the heart of school priorities – being inclusive by design.”*

# What do we mean by the term 'environment'?

The DfE sees 'environment' as including:

- Physical features
- Relationships
- Structures
- Expectations
- Communication and language

We should be providing 'an enabling environment' where all pupils can develop their independence, access learning, feel supported, increase their confidence and feel safe.

What are your thoughts on this classroom environment? (picture taken from the internet)



Put your ideas in the chat box.

# What can you do straight away to make your classroom SEND friendly?

- Limit the amount on display and keep the colours neutral. Bright multi-coloured displays are lovely but can cause sensory overload for all pupils.
- Keep walls clear. Keep the space around the whiteboard and in-between display boards clear so as not to distract. Try to avoid hanging too much from the ceiling especially over workspaces and carpet areas.
- Classroom layout – try to avoid placing furniture too close together as it can cause a bottleneck at transition times. This can cause pupils anxiety when moving around the base.
- De-clutter - Be ruthless with what is in your classroom. If it is not played with, is broken or has parts missing then throw it out.
- When using the Interactive Whiteboard, use soft pastel backgrounds and a complimentary font colour.
- In September, start minimalist and work up from there, depending on how the class copes with stimulation. Lots of pupils with SEND do not cope well with change, so avoid changing a whole area overnight without preparation.

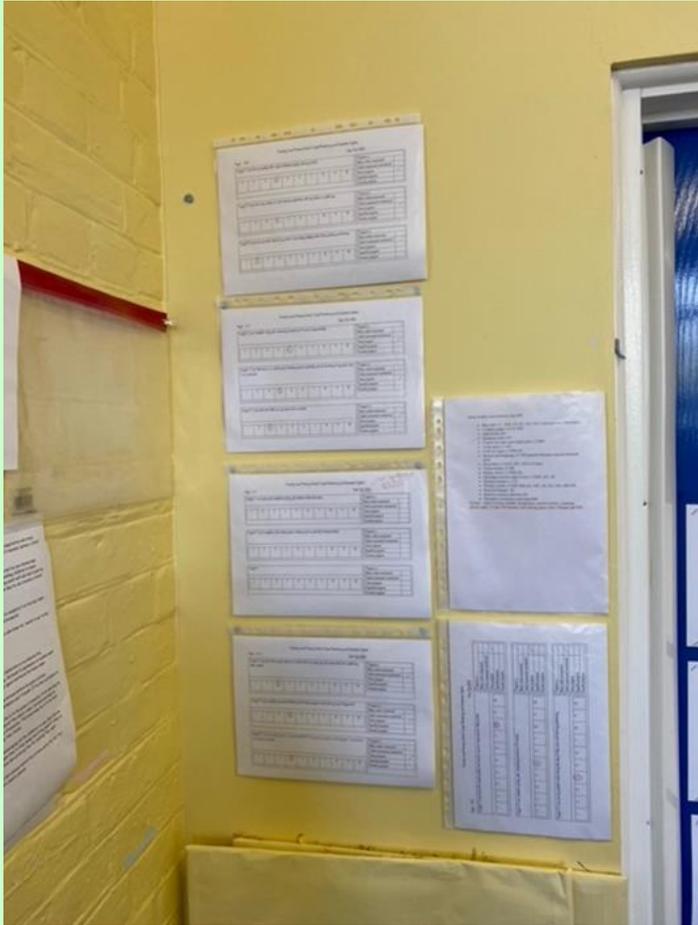


# What do you need to use to make your classroom SEND friendly?

- A visual timetable and personalised portable ones where necessary.
- Visual cues that all staff use consistently.
- Multi-sensory does not mean overloading all the senses through complex textures, smells and sounds. Be selective until you find out what engages them.
- A quiet even tone to ensure you are not adding to the sensory stimulation.

# What do I need to set up to make my classroom SEND friendly?

- Hot desks for pupils who find it difficult to cope.
- Screen off areas if needed to make new ones for focused work or interventions.
- Have clear areas that pupils and staff can walk around (not through) so as not to disrupt others' learning.
- A quiet place where pupils can go to get used to the environment and watch others.
- Put systems in place for collective responsibility for the provision for pupils with SEND (e.g. targets and provision maps accessible)



# What do I need to be mindful of?

- Be aware of the lighting, sounds and smells of the classroom. These can have a big impact.
- Pupil's position in the classroom.
- Pupil's chair and desk height.
- The volume that the adults speak at in the class.
- The need to show pupils what the different areas are for and how to help themselves in a way that is relevant to them. Don't presume they know what everything is and what it is used for. Teach me - show me.
- Having clear parameters for dealing with behaviour incidents so that not all adults are involved each time.

# Building relationships

- Be consistent and predictable.
- Ensure the teacher spends time with the pupil as well as support staff.
- Always follow through what you have communicated.
- Reduce verbal communication where possible to simple language and visual representations to avoid overloading the pupil.
- Have high expectations but with the right concrete support and strategies for the pupil to reach them.
- Ensure that new learning involves what engages the pupil in order to see progression and engagement.

# Preparing yourself

- Read up on the conditions that pupils have who are coming into your class. 'If you know one autistic child, you know one autistic child.'
- Speak to your SENCo and ask for advice.
- Read up on external agency reports and ensure you know what was in place at pre-school. Have they had EYAT or Area SENCo support?
- Be aware of the child's likes and dislikes so that you can tailor activities from the first day.
- Prepare simple Pen Portraits for key children.
- Do you know how to spot the signs of certain special educational needs? Speak to your SENCo.

# Engagement Model and Year R

- SENCOs across the city should have attended training on the Engagement Model which replaces P Levels 1-4.
- Use of the model for KS1 and KS2 becomes statutory in September 2021.
- It is not statutory to use in Year R, however it could be a useful tool to compliment the Early Years curriculum and provide insight into how pupils with complex SEND engage.
- Keep observations on the areas of engagement so a profile can be made to help inform provision.

## EYFS webinars – Wednesdays 3:45pm-4:45pm

19<sup>th</sup> May – Learning to Learn

9<sup>th</sup> June – Communication strategies

16<sup>th</sup> June – Facilitating engagement through music

23<sup>rd</sup> June – Getting Started – developing sensory exploration and engagement

30<sup>th</sup> June – Chillwell and self-regulation

7<sup>th</sup> July – Schemas

# For further support and training

For further support in developing your EYFS setting to meet the needs of pupils with SEND or to assess pupils using the Engagement Model, please contact:

[info@southamptoninclusion.net](mailto:info@southamptoninclusion.net)

