Welcome to the SENCO Bulletin. In order to locate specific information, please click on the relevant title from the contents list below for easy access. To support navigation, there is a link at the start of each section/article which will return the reader to the list of contents below.

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The SENCO Bulletin includes information which may be relevant and/or of interest to a range of staff in schools, so please do share this information as appropriate. If you do identify particular interests which you would like us to feature, please contact the SENCO Bulletin Team.

SLCN screening tools

Summarised below are examples of screening tools to support the identification and assessment of speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) – a focus highlighted by school staff at last term’s SLCN conference.

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<tr>
<th><strong>Speech, Language and Communication Progression Tools – Primary</strong></th>
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<td>The Progression Tools aim to support teaching staff to identify children who may be struggling to develop their speech, language and communication skills. They can also be used to track progression of these skills over time or following interventions.</td>
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<td>There are 8 Progression Tools, which highlight children and young people’s language skills at the following key ages of development: 3, 4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10 in early years and primary school, and 11-12, 13-14 and 16-18 in secondary school. They are based on research with clear information about expected milestones.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Each Tool contains a colour booklet with instructions on how to use it, questions to ask the children, guidance on how to observe their behaviour, and methods to track the results. It also contains black and white versions of the questions and observations sections and the scoring tables for you to photocopy as many times as you wish for the number of children with whom you use the Tool.</td>
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<th><strong>WellComm Toolkit GL Assessment</strong></th>
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<td>An individual assessment developed in collaboration with leading practitioners at the Sandwell Primary Care Trust, the WellComm Toolkit is suitable for children aged 6 months to 6 years. The toolkit deploys a unique traffic light system that clearly identifies children requiring immediate intervention, as well as those who show potential language difficulties. The innovative system has the additional benefit of banding children by placing them into one of three</td>
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categories, red, amber or green, thus enabling the practitioner to proactively respond to any needs identified:

The Big Book of Ideas provides practitioners with over 150 bespoke intervention activities to meet individual needs as identified through the screening process. The activities are designed to be fun, engaging and appropriate for use with both individual children and groups across the entire age range. They also provide a helpful guide for parents to support their child’s development at home. All activities are photocopiable and can be printed from the Resources CD that is included in the WellComm Toolkit.

A useful add-on to the WellComm Toolkit comes in the form of the Online Report Wizard, an online tool that enables both large and small organisations, including Local Authorities, to monitor and evaluate the progress made by children using the WellComm Toolkit. It is available at an additional cost.

**SpeechLink**

Primary school SLCN packages:

- **Infant Language Link** and **Junior Language Link** include a language screening assessment and a whole range of supporting resources and advice are provided to address both classroom practice and small group work. The assessments are recommended for use as a universal screen in year R and the start of Key Stage 2.

- **Speech Link** enables teachers to check for delays in the development of speech sounds. Speech work within school or referral to a speech and language therapist is recommended by the screening tool. Guidance, resources and games are provided to enable work with pupils in school.

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**SENCO Conference (3.10.17) – Workshops (10 - 11)**

Our final offerings from workshops run during the recent SENCO Conference are those addressing needs in the areas of Social, Emotional and Mental Health, and Autism and Social Communication.

### 10. Differentiating learning for pupils with anxiety

This session, presented by members of the Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs team, explored the challenges faced by pupils with anxiety and how these might be alleviated. Issues addressed included:

- the identification of needs; the impact of High Quality Teaching
- the role of the SENCO as coach to other teaching colleagues, and
- how to plan a simple programme to support children who experience anxiety about coming to school.

The annotated slides are available [here](#).

Delegates said:

“Good signposts to potentially useful resources. Provided training that I can take straight into school – just what we need.”

### 11. Supporting pupils with autism: scaffolding learning for independence

Delegates experienced a taster session of the pilot of training about scaffolding learning for independence, presented by Kathryn Miller and Maggie Butler (Specialist Teachers Autism/Social Communication needs).

Although the slides for this session cannot be made available at this current time (due to ongoing developments of the pilot materials), the team is however pleased to offer a new opportunity for Essex schools.
Many of you will be aware of the MITA programme (www.maximisingtas.co.uk) and Paula Bosanquet’s work on heuristic scaffolding, including her book ‘The Teaching Assistant’s Guide to Effective Interaction’ focusing on learning for independence in the classroom.

Participants amongst the early cohorts of schools engaging in the MITA programme identified that some of the approaches used in the scaffolding process might need adjustments for some learners, including those with autism. Tanya Cotier and Maggie Butler (Specialist Teachers, ASC) have been involved in a working group, alongside Paula Bosanquet and Nicole Whitelaw at the University of East London, to look at how the learning situation can be improved for children with autism in terms of scaffolding for independence and to produce training materials that we can use in Essex schools.

From Spring 2018 we would like to pilot the project training and materials for class teachers and learning support assistants in a range of schools in Essex. If you are interested in being part of this, whether or not you attended the conference sessions, for more information please contact: Maggie.Butler@essex.gov.uk or Tanya.Cotier@essex.gov.uk

Enabling music-making for the physically disabled

Do you have any pupils in your school who have upper limb disabilities, and who would like to learn a musical instrument? If so, then you may be interested in a UK-based charity, the OHMI Trust. The OHMI Trust’s objectives are to remove the barriers to making music that are faced by a child/young person with a physical disability, and to enable undifferentiated participation in musical life, whether at school or at home.

This organisation makes bespoke instruments/equipment, specially adapted so that they can be played by pupils across the ability range who have limited or no use of one hand.

The trust also a subsidy scheme for music lessons which allows children with upper limb disabilities to have longer individual lessons.

The trust can train up peripatetic music teachers who already visit schools to enable them to teach the pupils, and they can also provide instruments on loan, initially for 6 month periods.
The National Award is a mandatory qualification for all new-to-role SENCOs in schools and educational settings. Successful completion of the programme will ensure SENCOs have the high level of knowledge and skill required to lead on the development of policy and practice for children and young people with special educational needs in the school.

The National Award is offered through a national programme run locally through local authority groups. Congratulations to the Essex cohort (No 10), some of whom were able to attend a recent presentation event at Rivenhall Hotel. Sixty-three SENCOs in cohort 10 were successful in achieving the award this year.

Autism in the news

Government to look at waiting times target for autism diagnosis

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt has committed to looking at whether to introduce a target for autism diagnosis waiting times across the NHS in England. This follows the Government’s recent commitment to start recording and publishing diagnosis waiting times.

On 1 November, the Health Secretary acknowledged that nobody should be waiting longer than the time set out by guidelines from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). He then agreed to look further at the idea of a target, as has been introduced for other conditions. NICE advises that the time between referral for a diagnosis and first appointment should be no longer than three months. Some children and young people are reported to be waiting more than four years.

Reminder: Expressions of interest for the 12-session ‘Working with children and young people with autism’ training, presented by the Educational Psychology service (highlighted in the SENCO Bulletin 06 November), should be made by email to: sally.scales@essex.gov.uk by 20 November 2017.

Are you a SENCO in a multi-academy trust?

Do any of the following statements ring true for you?

- Teachers lack knowledge about SEND having received little specialist training during initial teacher training
- Teaching staff are not confident in identifying and supporting pupils with SEND effectively
- Planning, implementation and monitoring of interventions is inconsistent
- There is insufficient effective involvement from Senior Leadership Teams
- Attainment, progress and outcomes for pupils with SEND are causing concern.
If so, you are not alone! These statements form the rationale behind the recently released draft MAT SEND Framework. The framework is part of the MAT SEND Project, led by Academies Enterprise Trust, Northampton University and London Leadership Strategy with input from Whole School SEND partners, which aims to produce a whole trust/school approach to the support of SEND.

The Project team are keen to hear from SENCOs in MATs with their views on the draft. Click here to access a draft of the MAT SEND Framework. Feedback should be sent to jack@wholeschoolsend.com.

Clare Bennett, Lead Specialist Teacher INSET

Forthcoming SEND training events

For details, and booking, of centre-based SEND courses, please refer to the Essex Education Services Professional Development website: https://www.eescpdportal.org/

Enquiries about the SEN Training Programme

Autism Education Trust training

Bookings for in-school training:
Tier 1: Making Sense of Autism – 90 mins
Tier 2: Good Autism Practice – one day

Information on Autism Education Trust training for Essex schools

SEND drop-in sessions

Venues and dates for forthcoming SEND drop-in sessions (available in targeted areas) can be found here.

Quick Links

Educational Psychology Service
SEND Information Advice & Support Service
Statutory Assessment Service
SENCO Bulletin Archive
To view previous issues of the SENCO Bulletin

Specialist Teaching and Preschool Service
The service’s ‘Request for Involvement’ form can be found on our Primary Sector page

Provision Guidance Toolkit
Essex Local Offer

Pinterest

Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs
Hearing Impairment
Speech, Language and Communication needs
Learning Difficulties and Disabilities
Vision impairments
Physical and Neurological Impairment
Essex Selective Mutism Interest Group

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