

# What Works and the SEND Reforms

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This factsheet gives an overview of how practitioners can use *What Works* to support decision making in light of the new SEND Code of Practice. It highlights sections of the Code relating to evidence-based provision and suggests ways in which *What Works* can support practitioners in light of the Code.

## Introduction to *What Works*

*What Works* is a moderated virtual library of evidenced interventions to support children's speech, language and communication. *What Works* helps early years practitioners, teachers, school leaders, and speech and language therapists (SLTs) find the most appropriate interventions for children and young people by providing a free and easily accessible overview of the evidence base for each intervention. *What Works* aims to support decision making not determine it.

The virtual library allows users to search for interventions by target group, age range, focus of the intervention, who it's delivered by, and by what type of format. The evidence for each intervention is rated as 'strong', 'moderate' or 'indicative' as determined by an academic panel of experts. A summary of the evidence base and academic references are also given. N.B. it is important to note that strength of evidence does not necessarily equate to strength of outcome, therefore it is important to carefully read the details of the entries to ensure the most appropriate interventions are chosen for the specific children in your care.

| Step 1<br>Target Group                 | Step 2<br>Age Range                | Step 3<br>Focus of Intervention     | Step 4<br>Delivered by              | Step 5<br>Format                   |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speech        | <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool | <input type="checkbox"/> Universal  | <input type="checkbox"/> Specialist | <input type="checkbox"/> Manual    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Language      | <input type="checkbox"/> Primary   | <input type="checkbox"/> Targeted   | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher    | <input type="checkbox"/> Approach  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary | <input type="checkbox"/> Specialist | <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant  | <input type="checkbox"/> Technique |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complex needs |                                    |                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other      |                                    |

## The SEND Reforms and evidence-based provision

The **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 0-25** received Parliamentary approval in July 2014 and is in force from 1 September 2014. The Code provides the statutory guidance relating to the **Children and Families Act**, which contains clauses on special education needs (SEN) that put into place wide-reaching reforms to the SEND system for children and young people aged 0 to 25 in England.

The Code of Practice applies to all organisations who work with and support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. This includes local authorities, health agencies, Early years providers and all schools. The Government have stated that the principles underlying the Code and wider Reforms are:

- a focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning
- successful preparation for adulthood, including independent living and employment
- the early identification of children and young people's needs and early intervention to support them
- collaboration between education, health and social care services to provide support

- high quality provision to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- the participation of children, their parents and young people in decision making
- greater choice and control for young people and parents over support

As part of the 'high quality provision to meet the needs the needs of children and young people with SEND', those who must have regard to the Code should use evidence-based interventions and approaches. Educational settings, joint-commissioning arrangements and local authorities are responsible for accessing the best possible evidence as these three quotes from the Code demonstrate:

- Early years providers, schools and colleges should know precisely where children and young people with SEN are in their learning and development. They should...ensure that the **approaches used are based on the best possible evidence** and are having the required impact on progress, (section 1.25 of the Code).
- Joint-commissioning arrangements should be based on **evidence about which services, support and interventions are effective**. Local areas should maintain **up-to-date information on research and guidance about good practice**, for example through referring to NICE guidance and Campbell collaboration/Cochrane collaboration, (section 3.30).
- Local authorities must set out in the Local Offer the support available to help children and young people with SEN or disabilities move into adulthood. **Support should reflect evidence of what works in achieving good outcomes**, (section 4.52).

In addition, the Code gives detail on how educational settings across the age range should use the evidence base in assessing, planning, delivering and reviewing provision as these references show.

#### **Early years settings:**

- The special educational provision made for a child should always be based on an understanding of their particular strengths and needs and should seek to address them all, **using well-evidenced interventions targeted at areas of difficulty** and, where necessary, specialist equipment or software, (section 5.33).
- The support and intervention provided should be selected to meet the outcomes identified for the child, **based on reliable evidence of effectiveness**, and provided by practitioners with relevant skills and knowledge. Any related staff development needs should be identified and addressed, (section 5.40).

#### **School settings:**

- The support and intervention provided should be selected to meet the outcomes identified for the child, **based on reliable evidence of effectiveness**, and provided by practitioners with relevant skills and knowledge. Any related staff development needs should be identified and addressed, (sections 6.27 and 6.50).
- The SENCO and class teacher, together with the specialists, and involving the pupil's parents, **should consider a range of evidence-based and effective teaching approaches, appropriate equipment, strategies and interventions** in order to support the child's progress, (section 6.62).

#### **Further education:**

- **Support should be evidence-based**. This means that colleges should be aware of effective practice in the sector and elsewhere, and personalise it for the individual, (section 7.14).

- Where the college decides a student needs SEN support, the college should discuss with the student their ambitions, the nature of the support to be put in place, the expected impact on progress and a date for reviewing the support. Plans should be developed with the student. The support and intervention provided should be selected to meet the student's aspirations, and **should be based on reliable evidence of effectiveness** and provided by practitioners with the relevant skills and knowledge, (section 7.16).

### How to use *What Works* in light of the SEND Reforms

*What Works* is a user-friendly way to find the most appropriate evidence-based interventions for the children and young people you work with. As a moderated virtual library of evidenced interventions, *What Works* aims to stay as up-to-date as possible and provide one place where busy practitioners can go to access the evidence base relating to children's speech, language and communication.

The original content of *What Works* came from the Better Communication Research Programme's (BCRP) thematic report *What Works: Interventions for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs*. This report was published in 2012 and the Trust worked with the original authors to translate this report into a virtual library to ensure as many practitioners can access the information as possible. *What Works* was launched in March 2013.

*What Works* is now maintained and further developed by a Moderating Group of academics and representatives from the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and The Communication Trust. This group meets quarterly to ensure that *What Works* remains as up-to-date and as comprehensive as possible through a robust and independent process to ensure quality and fairness of approach.

Therefore, *What Works* can be used as a tool by professionals who want to access the latest evidence in order to meet their requirements under the Code.

Nasen has provided detailed guidance for SENCOs in ***Everybody Included: The SEND Code of Practice explained*** which gives key guidance on delivering the Code. In this guidance, Nasen state that 'SENCOs need to keep abreast of...the increasing body of research around what type of approach and/or provision works best for pupils with a range of additional needs' and cite *What Works* as one of the places that collates this information - [www.nasen.org.uk/onlinesendcpd](http://www.nasen.org.uk/onlinesendcpd)

There are also a number of other ways in which you can use *What Works* in an educational setting:

- In addition to specific interventions on *What Works*, there is guidance on the site on the other important aspects of support needed for pupils with SLCN/SEN, such as professional development, strong leadership, robust inclusive practices, etc.
- *What Works* can help you to identify the most appropriate interventions to use with your pupils, and help you map and plan provision across your setting. Remember, this will be based on you having a clear understanding of your pupils' needs and your school context.
- You can use *What Works* to research potential interventions, and in some cases compare similar approaches.
- If you already use interventions in your setting, you could use *What Works* to see if they provide what you need and you can compare them with other evidenced interventions available.

- *What Works* can also help you develop an approach to collecting and sharing information on your experiences of using different interventions. Measuring the impact of these interventions in your setting is part of your requirements under the SEND Information Report. You can record your experience of using these interventions using the 'ten critical factors' template in the 'Evidence' section of *What Works*.
- As a staff team, you could review which interventions may be the most effective for you to use in your setting. You can also share your evidence and experiences with other professionals via *What Works* through the 'in practice' section; we are always keen to hear practitioners' experiences of using the interventions in practice.

## More information

For more information on What Works including a list of frequently asked questions, please go to [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/whatworks](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/whatworks)

There is a wide range of guidance available to help practitioners deliver the SEND Reforms:

- The Code itself, alongside a wide range of supporting information and guidance, is available from the **Department of Education** at [www.gov.uk/childrens-services/special-educational-needs](http://www.gov.uk/childrens-services/special-educational-needs)
- The **SEND Pathfinder** website shares learning from the pathfinders and pathfinder champions in order to support the delivery of Reforms - [www.sendpathfinder.co.uk](http://www.sendpathfinder.co.uk)
- **The Communication Trust** is committed to supporting all those implementing the SEND Reforms to meet the needs of children and young people with SLCN and their families. You can find all our other guidance and resources relating to the Reforms, including our recently published online report on **joint commissioning** on behalf of The Communication Council at [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/sendreforms](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/sendreforms)
- The Trust has updated the **Communication Commitment** to reflect the Code. The Commitment is a free resource that supports schools to develop a personalised, whole-school approach towards communication [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/commitment](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/commitment)
- The Communication Trust's Consortium is a group of nearly 50 voluntary and community sector organisations that provide a vast range of resources and services relating to children and young people's speech, language and communication – you can find out about all that they provide in the **Consortium 0-25 Catalogue**: [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/consortiumcatalogue.aspx](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/consortiumcatalogue.aspx)
- The **Council for Disabled Children** provides a wide range of information and guidance relating to the changes under the Reforms - [www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sendreforms](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sendreforms)
- The **Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists'** website includes a number of briefings and other information on the Reforms at [www.rcslt.org](http://www.rcslt.org)
- Nasen has provided detailed guidance for educational settings in ***Everybody Included: The SEND Code of Practice*** explained which gives key guidance on delivering the Code: [www.nasen.org.uk/onlinesendcpd](http://www.nasen.org.uk/onlinesendcpd)
- **The Dyslexia SpLD Trust**, another of the organisations named as offering support and guidance in the Code, has produced specific guidance on the SEND Reforms, available at [www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk](http://www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk)