Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties

Developing skills

QCA Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

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Contents

Introduction

What is the purpose of this guidance?

This guidance supports the planning, development and implementation of the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties. It draws on effective practice across a range of schools and can be used in mainstream and special primary and secondary schools, specialised units and independent schools. It also provides support to the range of services that work with these schools.

The guidance can be used with the school's own material, the national curriculum and the frameworks for teaching literacy and mathematics to:

* confirm the statutory entitlement to learning for all pupils and build on the principles of inclusion set out in the national curriculum

* help schools develop an inclusive curriculum by:

  – setting suitable learning challenges

  – responding to pupils' diverse learning needs

  – including all learners by overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment

* provide a stimulus to revisit and revise existing schemes of work or a basis to develop new ones.

Who are the pupils?

The guidance relates to all pupils aged between 5 and 16 who have learning difficulties, regardless of factors such as their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background or gender, or the extent of their other difficulties. This includes pupils who are unlikely to achieve above level 2 at key stage 4. (These pupils are usually described as having severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties.) This also includes pupils with learning difficulties who may be working at age-related expectations in some subjects but are well below this in others. (These pupils, along with those with other significant difficulties, are often described as having moderate learning difficulties.)

Who is the guidance for?

The guidance supports the work of a range of adults who are concerned with meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. This includes class teachers, subject coordinators, special educational needs coordinators (SENCos), senior managers, teaching assistants, parents,

carers, governors, therapists, local authority and advisory support services, and professionals from health, social services and the voluntary sector. Throughout these materials, the term 'staff' is used to refer to all those concerned with the education of these pupils.

What is in the guidance?

The guidance contains:

- support on developing and planning the curriculum

- support on developing skills across the curriculum

- subject materials on planning, teaching and assessing each national curriculum subject; religious education (RE); and personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. These include descriptions of pupils' attainment showing progress up to level 1 of the national curriculum, which can be used to recognise attainment and structure teaching.

What does the guidance do?

This material focuses on the development of generic, transferable skills across the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties. At early levels of learning, it explains and gives examples of:

- key functional skills

- skills for learning

- thinking skills

- personal skills and other priorities.

The suggestions provided for each area are not exhaustive and they can be broken down into more finely graded steps to meet the needs of individual pupils. Many of these skills are closely linked and staff can explore the ways in which these links can support learning across the curriculum and across key stages and levels. Links are made, where appropriate, to:

- the relevant national curriculum subjects and programmes of study

- other skill areas.

This material should be read along with the sections on promoting skills on the national curriculum website (curriculum.qca.org.uk).

Key functional skills

To improve learning and performance in education, work and life, three skill areas are embedded in the subjects of the national curriculum. Described as key functional skills, these are: communication (including literacy and other aspects of English), application of number (and other aspects of mathematics), and using information and communication technology.

Communication

For pupils with learning difficulties, the key skill of communication is fundamental to participation and achievement in all curriculum areas. The key skill of communication includes:

- responding to others, *for example, through facial expression or gestures*

- communicating with others, *for example, expressing preferences and needs*

- interacting with others, *for example, through mutual gaze with another or joint participation*

- communicating effectively using preferred methods of communication with different groups of people, *for example, one to one with a member of staff, in a small group of peers, or in a school assembly*

- communicating for a variety of purposes, *for example, expressing feelings, forming and maintaining friendships, describing or commenting*

- communicating appropriately in different contexts, *for example, the classroom, local shops, the workplace and the home*

- recognising and obtaining information, *for example, photographs, pictures, symbols, text, recipes for preparing food from objects*

- recording and recalling information in a variety of ways, *for example, through self-assessment sheets in behaviour management*

- the application of emerging literacy skills, *for example, recognising logos, symbols and information signs in the community.*

For pupils with learning difficulties, communication takes place in a number of ways and involves all the senses. Preferred methods of communication may include the use of:

- body language, *for example, turning towards or away, stiffening, relaxing*

- facial expression, *for example, smiling or grimacing*

- eye-pointing

- objects of reference to signal events or to indicate choices

- communication aids

- photographs, pictures and symbols, *for example, in a communication book*

- print

- signing

- information and communication technology (ICT)

- sounds and the spoken word.

Individual needs and interests need to be taken into account. Pupils may need input from speech and language therapists or English as an additional language (EAL) teachers who can provide individually focused communication and language programmes. Some examples of specific teaching approaches include intensive interaction and the picture exchange communication system (PECS).

The case studies below show pupils learning to communicate in different ways. There are age differences and although the pupils' physical disabilities are similar, their learning needs are not the same and they require different approaches.

Joseph

Joseph is a year 1 pupil who has cerebral palsy. He vocalises in response to adults but his sounds are not yet recognisable as words. In consultation with his parents and the speech and language therapist, he has been provided with a speech-input tool which helps him communicate his needs and ideas, organise them, and make choices. The voice of a boy of the same age is used to record the words and phrases that Joseph needs. He chooses them by pressing the right pad in response to requests and comments. The speech and language therapist supports staff and parents in helping Joseph to use the device and select the most appropriate words and phrases.

Maria

Maria is a year 8 pupil in a unit in a mainstream school. Her communication needs are different from Joseph's but are similar to many of the pupils in her class. Like Joseph, she needs support to organise how she communicates. One of her targets in her individual education plan (IEP) is to organise her speaking and writing to produce clear descriptions and evaluations. In science, the group are freezing and thawing various foods. Pupils have to identify and describe changes and record their findings. Maria is learning to describe the process in the correct order, identify changes and work with others to decide which foods are likely to freeze successfully. She needs extra help to order her thoughts in a logical way. Staff help her by the use of questions, prompts, examples, symbols and pictures, and by clustering ideas together.

Opportunities for developing the key skill of communication can be provided across the curriculum as well as through English sessions and classes that focus on literacy. Further details are given in the accompanying English subject material.

Application of mathematical and number skills

For pupils with learning difficulties, the application of mathematical skills entails learning basic number skills and using them in practical situations. Skills include:

- exploring and manipulating objects, which helps pupils understand and apply the idea of object permanence

- recognising, predicting and interpreting patterns and routines, *for example, sequencing activities throughout the day, copying a drumbeat, responding to 'stop/go' in drama or PE*

- matching, sorting, grouping, comparing and classifying activities, *for example, organising money to buy an item at a checkout*

- collecting, recording, interpreting and presenting data, *for example, measuring the growth of a sunflower or carrying out a survey which may relate to house types, eye colour, plans to make a child's toy or favourite sandwich fillings*

- being able to understand the use of mathematical language to solve practical problems, *for example, arranging chairs for assembly, laying the table, catching the correct bus, using a travel timetable.*

A local survey

As part of a key stage 1 geography curriculum unit, 'Investigating the quality of the local environment', pupils carry out a survey to find out how many and what type of vehicles pass the school in a given period. They talk about what type of vehicles they expect to see, and the teacher has prepared a grid for each pupil with pictures of cars, lorries, buses, bicycles and pedestrians in each square. As each vehicle passes, the pupils tick off the right picture on their grid. When they return to the class, the pupils cut out the squares they have ticked and make them into a simple bar chart. The pupils have to count the total for each type of vehicle and talk about the most and least frequent. Individual pupil targets are included in the planning of this geography activity as many of the skills involved link closely with numeracy. Razia's target is to count objects to three. She is asked to count how many buses pass the school, as these are infrequent. Jacob, Andrew and Bethany are learning to count to higher numbers.

They are asked to count more frequent vehicles. On returning to the classroom, they continue to practise the skills by counting the total for each type of transport.

Skills in the application of number can be developed through mathematics sessions and classes that focus on number, as well as through pupils' use of number skills across the curriculum. Further details are given in the mathematics subject material.

Using information and communication technology

Information and communication technologies can be used and applied by pupils with learning difficulties for a range of purposes, such as:

- engaging with a range of stimuli, *for example, tracking images across a computer screen or listening to pre-recorded sound effects*

- working with computer-generated models, *for example, choosing from two options to complete an on-screen pattern*

- affecting the environment, *for example, using a switch to start music, to attract the attention of others or to start a dialogue*

- promoting independence, *for example, using a joystick to steer a powered wheelchair around the school*

- enabling and improving communication, *for example, taking photographs to improve presentation, using a speech output device to show choice or using email*

- a source of information, *for example, using television, email, the internet or DVDs.*

Linking to Europe

A mixed class of key stage 4 pupils with learning difficulties is working on a European Links project with a similar class of pupils in Germany. Several pupils, as part of the targets identified in their IEPs, are learning to use ICT as a source of information and communication. With support, the pupils use video links and email to plan a visit to each other's schools. After the visits they continue the links for leisure, and work to maintain friendships and good communications. Their follow-up work includes sending video clips of their visits, scanning photographs and producing letters.

Information and communication technology skills can be developed through ICT sessions and by pupils' use of ICT across the curriculum. Further details are given in the ICT subject material.

Skills for learning

Further skills that will help young people to become team workers, reflective learners and independent enquirers are embedded in the subjects of the national curriculum. Developing these skills can help pupils with learning difficulties to work with others, improve their own learning and performance and solve problems.

Working with others in a team

For pupils with learning difficulties, learning to work with others in a team involves:

- developing social skills, *for example, awareness and/or tolerance of others, empathy and awareness of the feelings and perspectives of others, turn-taking, sharing, getting a balance between listening and responding, negotiating and supporting*

- gaining, maintaining or directing the attention of others, *for example, vocalising or signing to ask to join in a group activity*

- adopting and accepting different roles appropriate to the setting, *for example, group leader, recorder or reporter*

- recognising the rules and conventions of different groups in formal and informal settings according to the size of the group, *for example, parties, playground games, one-to-one conversations or work experience*

- recognising a common purpose, *for example, working together to create a scene in drama.*

Planning a public performance

As part of a term's project, a mixed class of year 8 pupils have been role-playing a favourite story. After performing it in assembly with great success, the pupils decide to give a public performance to parents/carers to raise money for school funds. They record the tasks related to planning and performing the play. Supported by members of staff, they discuss their personal strengths, delegate responsibilities and set about the tasks. Using a computer, one group makes the posters to advertise the show. Danny, a pupil whose learning difficulties are profound and whose movements are limited, presses the switch to activate the printer. He is developing his ICT skills and his friends guide his hand when necessary. Another group of pupils

discuss refreshments. They ask staff and pupils what food and drink they like, list what they will need to buy, calculate the costs and shop at the local cash and carry. The show is well attended and a great success. The pupils decide to do another performance at a local day centre for the elderly.

The national curriculum emphasises that all subjects, including PSHE and citizenship, provide opportunities for pupils to cooperate and work effectively with others in formal and informal settings, to appreciate the experience of others, to consider different perspectives and to benefit from what others think, say and do.

Reflecting on learning

Reflecting on their own learning can help pupils with learning difficulties to:

- recognise why a task is carried out and what it involves, *for example, joining in with spreading and cutting activities in the kitchen on the understanding that this will lead to the preparation of a snack*

- recognise the completion of a task, *for example, following a sequence of symbols as a way to achieve an agreed outcome in the workplace*

- communicate preferences and choices, *for example, in working styles or curriculum areas*

- give reasons for individual preferences, *for example, a liking for a certain subject because it means working with a group of friends*

- recognise personal achievements, *for example, knowing that increased confidence in one area of the curriculum can lead to increased enjoyment*

- recognise difficulties experienced, *for example, in using a tin opener, talking to unfamiliar adults or asking for help*

- identify and evaluate strengths and weaknesses, *for example, 'I'm good at…' and 'I need help with…'*

- learn from mistakes and improve their own performance, *for example, remembering to use facial expressions to guide a member of support staff in pacing feeding at lunch times*

- set targets, *for example, responding to the prompt, 'What can I work on next?'*

- develop attention and concentration, progressing from external control to self-monitoring and the ability to switch attention between tasks.

All subjects, including PSHE and careers education, provide opportunities for pupils to review their work and discuss ways to improve their learning and performance.

Problem solving and independent enquiry

Problem solving skills have strong links with thinking skills. For pupils to become independent, they need to solve problems by using knowledge, memory and thinking skills. To help pupils with learning difficulties to develop more effective and independent thinking, staff can plan ways for them to take part in problem-solving activities that motivate, challenge and stimulate attention. Early problem solving requires an understanding of cause and effect, *for example, pushing away an unwanted object, removing a cloth from a favourite toy, using an adult to obtain an object.* Independent enquiry also involves:

- perception:

  – recognising opportunities, *for example, taking part in group attempts to solve problems*

  – recognising and identifying problems, *for example, a favourite toy out of reach, a missing bus pass before a journey, being in an uncomfortable position*

- thinking:

  – breaking down a problem into elements, *for example, a meal which involves buying food, then cooking and serving the food and clearing away*

  – thinking through the relevant features of a problem, *for example, what to do when faced with an overflowing sink*

  – planning ways to solve a problem, *for example, talking to other pupils about previous solutions to similar difficulties*

- action:

  – remembering how to solve a problem, *for example, using strategies such as rehearsal, visualisation or a symbol script*

- evaluation:

  – evaluating how a plan worked, *for example, honestly assessing the value of a contribution after a problem-solving attempt*

– recognising when existing plans and strategies need changes, *for example, stopping to think and talk with other pupils before starting to act.*

How do we keep the classroom safe and tidy?

Members of the class are learning about their responsibilities for keeping the classroom a safe and tidy place. This involves problem solving. Three pupils begin work with a teaching assistant, looking at a photograph which shows a 'before' situation and an 'after' when they have made some minor alterations. By pointing to different parts of the photograph and by using a topic-based symbol board, they find the next problem to be solved. They work together using the symbol board to order the tasks. After a role play, they evaluate their suggestions and make changes where necessary.

All subjects give pupils opportunities to respond to the challenge of problems and to plan, test, modify and review enquiry processes to achieve particular outcomes.

Thinking skills

Thinking skills complement the functional skills and learning skills and are embedded in the national curriculum. Thinking combines the related structures and processes of perception, memory, forming ideas, language and use of symbols – the basic cognitive skills which underlie the ability to reason, to learn and to solve problems. When pupils use thinking skills, they focus on 'knowing how' to learn as well as 'knowing what' to learn. For pupils with learning difficulties, the development of thinking skills also involves working on sensory awareness, perception and early cognitive skills.

Three combined processes determine success in thinking:

- input – obtaining and organising knowledge through sensory awareness and perception to confirm 'what I know'

- control – thinking through a situation and making actions meaningful, *for example, planning, decision making and evaluating*

- output – developing strategies for using knowledge and solving problems that combine 'what I do' with 'what I know', *for example, remembering, and thinking about and generating new ideas.*

To begin to make sense of the world, a pupil must perceive, attend to or take in sensory information. For some pupils with learning difficulties, sensory and/or physical impairments may make it difficult for them to select, separate and explain incoming information. For others, their responses to information and their storage and retrieval of it may be affected.

Ways to remember information and access and use thinking skills may need to be taught explicitly to pupils with learning difficulties. Learning to think is not achieved on its own. Creative thinking takes place in a social context and is influenced and moulded by the culture and environment in which pupils learn.

Richard and Joel

Richard and Joel are being encouraged to answer and ask questions to show their thinking processes. They are in year 4 and are working together to make a model aeroplane from found materials. They are learning to negotiate with each other about how they make the plane from the materials they have, and which are the best to use. The teacher encourages them to listen to each other's ideas and asks a series of questions that encourages their thinking: 'How can you stick those bits together? I wonder what will happen if you try the glue? Now why doesn't that stick them together? What will happen if you try the sticky tape? Why does that work better?'

Sensory awareness and perception

Sensory awareness and perception skills include:

- use of vision, *for example, fixing, inspecting, tracking, focusing*

- use of hearing, *for example, listening, responding to sound*

- use of touch, *for example, stroking different textures, squeezing materials with different densities*

- coordination of the use of senses, *for example, movement and vision, touch and taste.*

Early thinking skills

Early thinking skills include:

- predicting and anticipating

- remembering, *for example, by picturing, verbal rehearsal and clustering*

- the understanding of cause and effect

- linking objects, events and experiences

- thinking creatively and imaginatively, *for example, through play and experimentation, through the discovery and application of new connections and ideas and through active exploration.*

Predicting and anticipating

Kulsum is learning to anticipate routines and to look and attend. She particularly likes glittering, moving objects. Each day, after arriving at school, she is given an agreed-on, glittering object of reference (a puppet) and is taken to a quiet room. Once she is positioned correctly and is comfortable, Kulsum is encouraged to look at the moving puppet, which tells the story, using sensory information, of what will happen in her school day. In the darkened room, with a soft white light shining on the area of work, Kulsum develops skills such as:

- paying attention

- using her limited vision

- responding to a familiar adult

- being able to predict and anticipate events.

Remembering

Abdullah, a year 3 pupil, finds it difficult to remember the tasks he has to do and their sequence when he gets to school. Clare, the transport escort who brings him to his classroom, reminds him to go to his work tray, where he takes out his 'thinking board'. On a vertical strip of Velcro are several symbols to aid his recall, of a coat, toilet, fridge (to store his lunch), work. As he completes each task, he lifts the symbol off the board and places it in a pocket at the back. On returning to the classroom, he takes his independent work from his tray and completes it. His final task is to remember to tell a member of staff that he has finished.

Thinking creatively and imaginatively

In art, Michael has been asked to make handprints. He looks around and sees a large leaf. He spontaneously puts this in the paint and then on the paper.

Personal skills and other priorities

In addition to developing key functional skills, skills for learning and thinking skills, pupils with learning difficulties will need to gain a range of personal skills that will enable them to become effective participants and self managers. Some of these skills are cross-curricular and are relevant for all pupils across the key stages. Others may be specific to individual pupils in a particular age group. Targets focusing on these skills may form priority areas of learning for pupils in a range of contexts. Examples include:

- physical, orientation and mobility skills

- organisation and study skills

- personal and social skills, which include personal care and health skills, managing own behaviour and emotions

- daily living skills, which include domestic and community skills

- leisure and recreational skills.

Physical, orientation and mobility skills

Physical, orientation and mobility skills include:

- fine motor skills, *for example, holding, grasping and releasing, manipulating*

- whole body skills, including coordination of movement, *for example, reaching, rolling, walking*

- positioning skills, *for example, head control*

- managing the environment, *for example, movement between rooms*

- tolerating and/or managing mobility aids, *for example, splints, rolator, cane, wheelchair.*

Acquiring, developing, practising, applying and extending physical, orientation and mobility skills is a high priority for some pupils and takes up a large part of their learning time. For other pupils, these skills will be included in experiences and activities across the curriculum and therapies.

Sophia

Sophia is a year 1 pupil. She has complex learning needs exacerbated by cerebral palsy and a visual impairment. As part of her IEP, she is learning to use her sight and to turn her head towards those sounds, smells, textures and colours that she likes. She is beginning to show preferences for people, shiny and reflective surfaces and the colour red. In an art lesson, the class has been studying portraits. They look at their own reflections in mirrors that are flat, concave and convex so that they see several reflections of themselves. Sophia, wearing a big hat with red feathers, tracks the complex reflections of herself. She then works with her teaching assistant to create the images on a large silver, reflective board, positioned vertically beside her. Sophia turns towards the texture and colours placed close to her cheek and eye-points to her reflection. She adds materials such as netting and sequins to her hat.

Organisation and study skills

Organisation and study skills may be taught at each key stage and in all subjects. In later key stages, they can be incorporated in careers education as part of preparation for adult life. They include:

- attending to, and directing attention, *for example, learning to listen to verbal instructions*

- sustaining interest and motivation, *for example, during extended periods of work*

- selecting and organising their own environment, *for example, decorating a locker or workspace with personal items*

- managing their own time, *for example, using a personal schedule independently*

- completing a task, *for example, laying cutlery and crockery for a stated number of pupils for lunch*

- taking responsibility for tasks, *for example, working independently to a certain standard once a programme of work has been agreed.*

Personal and social skills

Personal and social skills have strong links with PSHE. Personal care skills include:

- dressing and undressing

- eating and drinking

- personal hygiene

- using the toilet

- medical routines.

For all pupils, acquiring, developing and practising personal care skills will be a high priority in the primary school, and for some pupils may take a large amount of time. As they grow older, most pupils will achieve independence and these skills will continue to be practised, generalised and extended. Some pupils with learning difficulties may remain dependent on adults for basic needs throughout their lives and, in such instances, personal care skills will remain priority areas of learning inside and outside school. Staff must make sure that pupils have as much control as possible over personal care and daily living activities.

Managing their own behaviour

Pupils with learning difficulties are no more or less likely to engage in behaviour that challenges than other pupils of the same age. Behaviour that challenges staff may, on the part of pupils, represent unusual ways to communicate or interact. Such behaviour may include:

- self-injurious behaviour

- confrontational non-compliance

- extreme states of avoidance and withdrawal, often associated with obsessive and ritualistic behaviours

- avoiding tasks, behaviour which disrupts, being easily distracted or especially active or hyperactive

- aggressively inappropriate sexual behaviour.

When behaviour like this occurs, staff should help pupils to recognise, manage and moderate their own behaviour rather than using external methods of control.

Nathan

Nathan is in year 4. He is developing a formal method of communication. He finds it very difficult to communicate his needs and, when staff members do not understand his idiosyncratic attempts to communicate, he becomes very agitated and dashes around the room screaming and flapping his hands. Recently he has started using a communication system which has led to more appropriate behaviour. A series of photographs showing familiar, desired objects and enjoyable routines is kept in his work tray. He is encouraged to select the relevant photograph and take it to a staff member so that his request may be more easily understood. If it is not appropriate for Nathan to engage in his chosen activity at that time, the photograph is placed on his symbol timetable, to be used at a more appropriate time. As well as controlling his behaviour, he is learning that if he cannot have something he requests straight away, his needs will be met later.

Managing their own emotions

Pupils with learning difficulties experience all emotions. Since some of these pupils, because of their complex needs, appear to be at early stages of development, their emotional reactions to specific events and situations can be underestimated. Staff must acknowledge their pupils' changing emotions when they:

- experience change in their personal circumstances at home and at school

- are coping with frustration and failure

- are managing responses to new or difficult situations

- express extreme positive or negative reactions to other people

- are learning to live with loss, grief and bereavement

- are adjusting to adolescence and adulthood

- are experiencing low self-esteem.

Staff can use methods such as quiet places, nurture groups, circle time, tutorial support and group or individual counselling in response.

Kassim

Kassim has severe learning difficulties. He also has profound hearing loss and finds it hard to communicate. As a teenager, he looks for new ways to show his changing and often turbulent emotions. Staff give him lots of opportunities to create his own patterns of activity. Kassim enjoys the increased sense of control and is responsible about making choices from a range of work and leisure options. When his anger and frustration do break through, Kassim is encouraged to do harmless cathartic activities that will release his emotions, like stuffing torn newspapers into plastic sacks. Kassim learns to use such activities when he feels the need. His disruptive, destructive and aggressive behaviours are dramatically reduced but, more importantly, Kassim is learning to become a young adult who can manage his own emotions.

Daily living skills

Daily living skills are about practical preparation for adult life. They include domestic skills and community skills. For pupils with learning difficulties, greater stress is placed on these skills in key stages 3 and 4 and post-16, in preparation for leaving school. Some aspects of these skills are dealt with regularly in familiar routines at all key stages, *for example, making drinks and snacks.*

Natalie

Natalie is a year 11 pupil. She is outgoing, sensible and has a pleasant nature. She also has severe difficulties in learning. All the pupils in her year can take part in a work experience placement and Natalie wants to work in a hotel. Her parents and the hotel management talk about it with her and she is offered a week's placement as a chambermaid. Working with the staff of the hotel, her duties include changing and making beds, tidying and cleaning rooms and clearing away breakfast trays.

After a preparatory visit to the hotel, she records the important parts of the placement to help her organise her work and remember her tasks, for example, when she needs to start and finish tasks, her

specific duties and the names of the key staff. She and her teacher talk about how she will behave and how she will obtain help. She takes her record sheet home and talks to her parents about how she will go about the tasks.

At the end of the week Natalie talks to her teacher about her placement and they note what she enjoyed and what she found difficult. Natalie reported that she liked changing beds and that the staff were friendly and helpful, but she found getting up at six o'clock to start work at seven very hard indeed.

Domestic skills

Domestic skills include:

- making drinks and snacks

- preparation of food, cooking and home management

- the ability to plan for a balanced diet

- following instructions and recipes

- cooking skills, *for example, slicing, grating, whisking, chopping, mixing, pouring*

- using appliances, *for example, kettle, toaster, microwave, cooker, food processor*

- understanding health and safety in the kitchen, *for example, hygiene, safe behaviour and actions.*

Community skills

Community skills include:

- developing a social sight vocabulary

- using different facilities and amenities in the community, *for example, café, park, leisure centre, playground, library, public toilet*

- getting to know a local area

- developing shopping skills, *for example, locating the shop and items in it, the use of lists, checkout procedures*

- using a telephone

- getting help, *for example, from police, community nurse, doctor*

- the practical use of money

- planning for and using public transport.

Leisure and recreational skills

Leisure and recreational skills include:

- communicating preferences and choices, *for example, choosing between two familiar activities in school, choosing a game for the group in a club session, choosing from a wide range of local leisure activities*

- making effective use of unsupervised time, *for example, break time, lunch time, time at home*

- becoming involved in social organisations, *for example, Scouts, sports clubs, youth organisations*

- using external amenities in local areas, *for example, swimming pools, ten-pin bowling alleys, cinemas*

- choosing, watching, listening to and evaluating media, *such as radio and television.*

Leisure and recreational skills are relevant across all age groups. Greater emphasis may be placed on skills for the use of community amenities in key stages 3 and 4 and post-16.

About this publication

Who's it for?

This handbook is for all those who work with pupils with learning difficulties. This includes pupils who are often described as having severe, profound and multiple, or moderate learning difficulties. The guidance relates to all pupils aged 5 to 16 who are unlikely to achieve above level 2 at key stage 4.

What's it about?

It provides guidance on developing skills across the curriculum. It explains and gives examples of key, functional skills, skills for learning, thinking skills, personal skills and other priorities that may be important in planning the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties.

What's it for?

It will be useful in developing an inclusive curriculum. It can be used in mainstream schools, special primary and secondary schools, specialised units and independent schools. It can also support the range of services that work with pupils with learning difficulties.

Related material

This handbook is part of a set of guidance on planning and teaching the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties. The entire set, which includes general guidance, guidance on developing skills and subject guidance, can be found on the QCA website at www.qca.org.uk/ld.