



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

Modern foreign languages



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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 are the subject materials?

The subject materials support staff in planning appropriate learning opportunities. The materials do not represent a separate curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties or an alternative to the national curriculum. They demonstrate a process for developing access to the national curriculum and support staff in developing their own curriculum to respond to the needs of their pupils at each key stage. The materials offer one approach to meeting this challenge. Schools may already have effective structures or may wish to adopt different approaches.

The materials identify learning opportunities relevant to each subject. They demonstrate appropriate learning across the scope of the national curriculum from the earliest levels. They are intended to increase schools' confidence in their capacity to provide appropriate access to the national curriculum.

A common framework for these materials has been used. In each subject, appropriate learning for pupils with diverse needs at each key stage has been identified. Those aspects of the programmes of study that may create particular difficulties are also discussed, as well as aspects that may be unsuitable at a particular key stage. The suggested activities can be used to develop ideas for relevant, accessible and challenging experiences in curriculum plans.

Responding to pupils' needs when teaching modern foreign languages

The importance of MFL to pupils with learning difficulties

Learning a modern foreign language (MFL) helps all pupils develop their interest and curiosity in the similarities and differences between themselves and others. This includes learning about countries, cultures, people and communities. Meeting people from other countries and cultures helps to broaden pupils' horizons by experiencing new and different languages and cultures. Learning the basics of a foreign language helps pupils to extend and develop their language and communication skills and can enhance self-esteem.

In particular, MFL offers pupils with learning difficulties opportunities to:

- become aware of themselves as citizens of the world, as well as in their own immediate environment and society
- become more aware of language, sounds, smells, tastes, images and artefacts from other countries and cultures by working with materials from these countries
- become more familiar with the sounds of an MFL and use a range of methods which develop speaking and listening skills rather than relying on the written word
- meet people from other countries and communicate with them in their own language
- develop imitation skills and the motivation to produce sounds and an expressive language
- use information and communication technology (ICT) for direct electronic contact, email or the internet so they can use a new language to communicate with schools and people in other countries
- support their learning in other subjects, *for example, English or geography*
- develop listening, concentration and social skills through partnership and group work
- work in a range of contexts and topics adapted to suit individual interests and motivations.

In response to these opportunities, pupils can make progress in MFL by:

- expanding their breadth and depth of experience, knowledge and understanding
- developing and extending new language and communication skills
- moving from the familiar to the less familiar
- developing understanding, *for example, from the concrete to the abstract.*

Modifying the MLF programmes of study

The statutory inclusion statement of the national curriculum requires staff to modify the programmes of study to give all pupils relevant and appropriately challenging work at each key stage. Staff should teach knowledge, skills and understanding in ways that match and challenge their pupils' abilities.

Staff can modify the MFL programmes of study for pupils with learning difficulties by:

- selecting, at key stage 3, some topics and materials from the non-statutory guidance at key stage 2
- maintaining, consolidating, reinforcing and generalising previous learning, as well as introducing new knowledge, skills and understanding
- providing opportunities for pupils to consolidate previous learning in a variety of contexts
- focusing on one aspect, or limited aspects, of the programme of study
- using the programme of study for MFL as a resource, or to provide a context, in planning learning appropriate to the age and needs of pupils
- including experiences which encourage pupils at early stages of learning to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding in MFL within the context of cultural awareness, through encounters with visual and sensory elements of a foreign country.

Acquiring knowledge and understanding of the target language

Knowledge and understanding of an MFL begin with pupils exploring their immediate physical environment through the senses. They may become aware of, and understand, the differences between such an environment and a more distant locality. Pupils gain knowledge and understanding of differences in language and culture through materials, artefacts and meeting people from places which are socially and culturally different from their home environment.

Developing language skills and language-learning strategies

Developing language skills and language-learning strategies across the key stages can help pupils to develop both of these aspects of the programme of study by encouraging them to:

- listen and respond to foreign language songs, poems or stories which have rhyming or repeated words. Staff may vary the repetition by saying things loudly, quietly, quickly or slowly
- listen carefully and discriminate between sounds, identify some meaning from words and intonations, and develop auditory awareness, *for example, using audio, video or DVD*
- respond to a certain word or phrase, *for example, a greeting*
- use symbols and audio recordings, *for example, a Language Master*, to associate a word and an object, and to record themselves or others
- increase social skills by providing new contexts for communication and interaction, *for example, taking part in pair and group work and developing turn-taking skills*
- express their own views about people, places and environments by showing a preference or by expressing likes and dislikes, *for example, using a growing vocabulary of words or symbols, gestures and facial expressions*
- develop general language skills through new learning experiences, resulting in the positive acquisition of a simple, relevant vocabulary that can be used for practical communication at a level appropriate to their ability
- respond to, use and understand words and phrases which are reinforced with visual aids, *for example, in a game with real objects, using puppets, video, picture flashcards and gestures*

- communicate messages by sending information in the form of pictures or text by email
- enhance self-esteem through opportunities for new achievements.

Developing intercultural understanding

Intercultural understanding begins with pupils' recognition that everybody is different. Contact with people and materials from other countries brings cultures alive and gives meaning and purpose to the study of MFL. Inviting people who speak other languages into school or using the internet, DVDs, brochures and magazines, can help pupils to see differences in language and culture. This helps pupils see themselves as part of a multi-lingual and multi-cultural society with a wide variety of languages, foods, festivals and celebrations. There may be opportunities to meet pupils' parents/carers and families who may speak other languages, to create links with local schools which have foreign language assistants on the staff or to make contact with a partner school abroad. Developing intercultural understanding across key stages can help pupils to:

- collect, explore and sort objects and artefacts from a foreign country
- respond to, and use, a range of resources for information and exploration, *for example, photographs, tactile pictures, postcards, DVDs, videos, artefacts and stories*
- be aware of other people and observe similarities and differences, *for example, focus on specific aspects of culture, such as people, food, festivals, dance, music or art in cross-curricular learning.*

Improving access to the MFL curriculum

Staff can make MFL more accessible by focusing on the senses. They can improve access by:

- using materials and resources that pupils can understand through sight, sound, touch, taste or smell, *for example, learning about the culture of a country in a simulated multi-sensory environment or in the context of guided imagery*
- organising a range of activities that simulate or represent aspects of a country
- providing help to observe, listen and understand features of a foreign country, its language, people and cultures
- giving first-hand experience of a spoken language.

Staff can also improve access by:

- exploiting everyday classroom events to use spontaneous speech (possibly contextualised to give a specific focus to a particular country for a week or so)
- decorating the school to celebrate a festival, *for example, using authentic materials, foods, posters, smells and sounds*
- providing opportunities to respond to spoken and written language in different ways, including ICT
- using ICT to help pupils access and communicate information, *for example, using the internet to exchange photographs and information through European Union (EU) schemes and school websites*
- using the target language creatively and imaginatively
- making links with a range of schools focusing on the target language
- encouraging pupils to listen, read or view for personal interest and enjoyment, as well as for information
- using the target language for different purposes, *such as sending letters or emails*
- setting work in a variety of contexts, *for example, everyday activities, personal and social life, the world around us, the world of work and the international world*
- encouraging an awareness of the wider world through stories or music in drama activities, *for example, simulation of journeys incorporating changes in climate, soundscapes and environments*
- using specialist aids and equipment
- encouraging support from adults or other pupils, but giving pupils space and freedom to do things for themselves and allowing them time to respond
- adapting tasks and environments to suit individual learners
- reinforcing and revisiting content by using a variety of contexts, resources, teaching and learning styles
- organising short teaching sessions and limiting new content to allow for shorter spans of concentration
- using items, *such as puppets, mascots and objects*, to add fun and elements of surprise to lessons, and action songs, games and rhymes to encourage a physical response

- being aware of the pace at which pupils work and of the physical effort required
- balancing consistency and challenge, according to individual needs.

Developing knowledge and understanding of an MFL can help pupils develop their broader communication and literacy skills through encouraging interaction with other pupils as well as staff. With some pupils, communication and literacy skills will develop as they use a range of visual, written and tactile materials, *for example, objects of reference and sounds of reference, adapted audio recorders and switch operation for voice recordings*. Symbols and symbol text may be used with a Language Master to develop independent and individual learning. These skills also develop as pupils use ICT and other technological aids. Other pupils' skills will develop as they use alternative and augmentative communication, *for example, body movements, eye gaze, facial expressions and gestures including pointing and signing*. There is no requirement to teach MFL at key stage 4. However, for many pupils, MFL offers satisfying challenges both as a subject in its own right and as a way of developing skills in many other areas of the curriculum.

Opportunities and activities at key stage 3

Introducing another language to pupils with learning difficulties can be seen as an opportunity to introduce a new subject in which pupils have no history of failure. Staff can use their professional judgement on its appropriateness. Much of the MFL programme of study is relevant to pupils with learning difficulties. With modification, it can provide stimulating and challenging learning opportunities.

The focus of teaching MFL at key stage 3 may be on giving pupils opportunities to:

- respond to aspects of cultural awareness through sensory investigation
- respond to songs, rhymes and greetings in a foreign language
- develop an awareness of similarities and differences in people, countries, communities and cultures.

Given these opportunities in MFL at key stage 3:

<p>all pupils with learning difficulties (including those with the most profound disabilities)</p>	<p>have opportunities to experience the language, sounds, smells, tastes, images and artefacts from foreign countries and especially from the countries where the target language is spoken. Presentations to pupils are made using clear and simple language and pupils are encouraged to touch and use real objects. Language and communication may be reinforced through a range of aural and visual methods, and the use of actions and signs.</p>
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<p>most pupils with learning difficulties (including those with severe difficulties in learning) who will develop further skills, knowledge and understanding in most aspects of the subject</p>	<p>learn the basics of a foreign language so they can greet others and communicate simple choices or preferences. The extension and development of new language and communication skills may help to enhance self-esteem.</p>
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a few pupils with learning difficulties who will develop further aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject show improvements in pronunciation, progress in reading and listening skills, and a growing awareness of language in general. They may communicate in the target language using questions and answers, introduce and talk about themselves in pairs and in groups to develop social skills as well as language skills.

Some parts of the programme of study may be too demanding for some pupils. These parts may include:

- writing clearly and coherently in the target language
- recognising that languages share common grammatical, syntactical or lexical features
- skimming and scanning written texts for main points or details
- redrafting writing to improve its accuracy and quality
- using dictionaries appropriately and effectively.

Such parts may become less demanding as pupils get older, but it may not be appropriate to teach these parts to some pupils during this key stage. It may be appropriate to teach some pupils aged 11 to 14 some aspects of the non-statutory guidance for MFL at key stage 2. The following activities show how this can be done and provide examples of approaches staff can take with units of work in MFL.

Greetings

In a project on the theme of greetings, pupils learn ways and words to greet one another. They share and pass around objects and artefacts in a group and develop their understanding and use of the target language.

Pupils acquire knowledge and understanding of the target language

They learn aspects of cultural awareness by experiencing the sensory elements of:

- music associated with, or sung, in the target language
- sample scents of a foreign country

- sample sounds of a foreign language
- sample tastes associated with a foreign country.

They may also learn about greetings in the foreign language through:

- handshakes and familiar signs, *for example, Makaton 'hello' and 'goodbye'*
- gestures and vocalising in the context of the foreign language
- imitating sounds or intonation
- imitating single words used as greetings.

Pupils may respond to the target language by:

- listening to songs and rhymes
- learning to vocalise to songs and rhymes
- listening to and repeating rhymes
- signing or singing the words from a song
- listening to what is heard, repeated and presented, accompanied by familiar signs or gestures
- imitating intonation of a vowel sound spoken from a recording
- imitating and repeating a sound or single word, using a simple switch to operate and repeat a sound on an audio recorder, *for example, by using a BIGmack switch*
- listening to and repeating a simple phrase.

Pupils can be encouraged to listen carefully to sounds, to develop auditory skills and to identify meanings by:

- associating a familiar activity with a new word or attributing meaning to a new word in the target language through games and repetition
- translating a word and using it in the new MFL context.

Information in a foreign language can be used and given through:

- positive and negative responses in the context of a MFL lesson
- indicating a preference when asked a familiar question in the foreign language, using additional signs and gestures

- verbal or signed answers to questions asked in the foreign language
- a learned phrase in the foreign language in response to a question and participating in short dialogues, identifying and using specific words to communicate meaning.

Pupils may acquire techniques for memorising sounds, words or phrases by:

- using visual techniques and signals to encourage intonation
- learning phrases with an appealing rhythm, *for example, 'comme ci comme ça' in French*
- joining in a rhyme to name body parts in sequence, and actively or with help touching parts of the body as they are said or sung.

Pupils may interpret contexts and clues by:

- associating the beginning of a lesson with a sound of reference or an object of reference
- attributing words they hear in MFL contexts to familiar objects or events
- associating sounds with the sign or object they represent in a MFL context using self-correcting strategies, *for example, matching pictures to sounds and using Language Master cards and recordings.*

Pupils may make use of their knowledge of English in learning a foreign language through:

- use of facial expressions and gestures to communicate
- use of turn-taking skills to repeat and imitate familiar sounds
- imitation of sounds recognised at the beginning and end of words
- use and imitation of words which are similar or the same in both languages (their own and the new one).

Festivals

In a project on festivals, pupils experience, observe and investigate traditions and celebrations, and develop cultural awareness. Although work in this project enhances all four aspects of the programme of study, there is a particular emphasis on developing language skills and cultural awareness.

Pupils develop language skills

They may recognise:

- an object (or object of reference) when the target language is spoken, accompanied by signing
- a symbol when the target language is spoken
- a single, written word when the target language is spoken.

Pupils may also understand simple aspects of grammar by learning and using short phrases by:

- operating a simple switch programmed with a two-word greeting or request
- sequencing words correctly when using short phrases
- using negatives in speech.

They may initiate or take an active part in conversations by:

- learning and using gesture as a greeting, and introducing themselves with signs or sounds
- learning and using familiar phrases relating to a theme, *for example, 'How are you?' 'Where do you live?'*
- interacting in a conversation using listening and communication skills appropriately
- communicating with each other in the foreign language in pairs, in groups and with their teacher
- signing instructions and directions in a game using agreed mimes or actions for different verbs
- responding to or giving one-word directions in the foreign language in the context of a game

- responding to or giving directions using familiar phrases in the context of a game, *for example, 'Simon says'*.

Pupils may use their knowledge of the language creatively and imaginatively by finding that:

- a single sound can convey different meanings if the pitch and duration are varied
- a single word can convey different meanings if the intonation, repetition or pitch are varied
- successful communication can be achieved by using the foreign language in crosscurricular contexts, *for example, with drama props to support language*, through the use of gesture, voice projection and recordings.

Pupils may learn how to use the foreign language by:

- communicating with foreign language speakers who visit the school or locality, *for example, foreign language assistants*
- asking for and buying food or drink in a café using the currency of the country in role play
- taking part in school trips abroad and by making links with schools in other countries.

Pupils develop cultural awareness

They may be taught about other countries and cultures by:

- working with authentic materials including some from ICT-based sources
- listening to classical, pop and folk music from the chosen foreign country or countries and tasting associated produce, food and drinks
- focusing on similarities and differences between two countries, using typical sounds, smells, tastes, colours and temperatures, and videos, photographs, paintings and travel posters
- focusing on pictorial information from a MFL context, tourist information and reference books, and the use of the internet or email to make connections with other countries.

In considering their own culture and comparing it with others, pupils focus on:

- the sensory elements of traditions, festivals and celebrations
- specific aspects of culture, *for example, through themes of foods, festivals, music, dance and art in cross-curricular activities*
- what is the same or different and why, *for example, that there are differences in climate, scenery, holidays, language, currency, sports, hobbies and fashion.*

Pupils may also:

- focus on the works of significant people, *such as composers, painters, inventors and writers*, which provide opportunities for sensory appreciation
- link with schools abroad, exchanging photographs and information through email
- use the internet and email to communicate with pupils from other countries and exchange information from school websites.

Opportunities and activities at key stage 4

MFL at key stage 4 is relevant to pupils with learning difficulties and can provide stimulating and challenging learning opportunities.

The focus of teaching MFL at key stage 4 may be on giving pupils opportunities to:

- develop knowledge and understanding of a foreign language, and learn with more independence
- extend their knowledge of countries in which the target language is spoken
- generalise their vocabulary of signs, symbols, words and phrases.

Given these opportunities in MFL at key stage 4:

all pupils with learning difficulties (including those with the most profound disabilities)

have opportunities to extend and consolidate their experiences of language, sounds, smells, tastes, images and artefacts from foreign countries and especially from countries where the target language is spoken. Presentations continue to be made to pupils using clear and simple language with an increased vocabulary. Pupils are encouraged to use and touch real objects. Language continues to be reinforced through a range of aural and visual methods and the use of actions and signs. Pupils have access to visual and audio aids appropriate for their age.

most pupils with learning difficulties (including those with severe difficulties in learning) who will develop further skills, knowledge and understanding in most aspects of the subject

continue to learn the basics of a foreign language so they can greet others and communicate simple choices or preferences. The extension and development of language and communication skills and the consolidation of vocabulary may enhance self-esteem.

a few pupils with learning difficulties who will develop further aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject show improvements in pronunciation, make progress in reading and listening skills, and continue to develop a growing awareness of language in general. They may communicate in the target language, using questions and answers, introduce and talk about themselves, and initiate and develop a conversation around a familiar topic. They have opportunities to work in pairs and groups to develop social skills as well as their language skills.

Some aspects of teaching, such as how to use dictionaries and other reference materials appropriately and effectively, may be too demanding for some pupils. Such aspects may become less demanding as pupils get older, but it may not be appropriate to teach these aspects to some pupils during this key stage. It may be appropriate to teach some pupils aged 14 to 16 the more demanding aspects of the non-statutory guidance for MFL at key stage 2.

Throughout key stage 4, staff can maintain and reinforce the knowledge, skills and understanding introduced during key stage 3 by applying these in different areas, and introduce new learning. The following activities show how this can be done and provide examples of approaches staff can take with units of work in MFL.

World of work

In a project on the theme of the world of work, pupils plan a real or imaginary visit to a foreign country to learn about travel, currency, passports and food.

Pupils acquire knowledge and understanding of the target language

They may be taught the sounds of the target language by listening to:

- rhymes, songs and music
- rhymes, single words and simple phrases spoken face to face
- clear speech and voice recordings of people who speak the language.

They may learn about how sounds and writing in the target language relate to each other by:

- associating a familiar activity or object with a word spoken in the target language through games and repetition
- associating a familiar picture, photograph or symbol with a word spoken in the target language
- associating a familiar written word or phrase with the same words spoken in the target language.

Pupils may establish the grammar of the target language through a core vocabulary that they hear regularly when learning the target language by:

- listening to short phrases or rhymes, accompanied by familiar signs or gestures
- imitating and repeating short phrases using a simple switch to record and repeat sounds, *for example, BIGmack switch or adapted audio recorder*
- using a variety of everyday expressions.

They may be taught to express themselves, using a range of vocabulary and structures, by:

- responding to spoken language, including body language, using intonation, gesture or action to communicate meaning and understanding
- meeting and greeting one another and getting close to, but not necessarily producing, recognisable words in the target language
- expressing feelings, likes and dislikes in simple terms, using positive and negative forms of speech, and replying with 'yes' or 'no' to simple questions in the target language.

Pupils develop language skills

They may be taught how to listen carefully by:

- focusing on a wide range of sounds, songs and voices from different countries
- watching or feeling and imitating mouth movements as sounds are formed

- concentrating on and imitating sounds and patterns of voice, *such as rising intonations to form questions, giving an equal stress to syllables in some languages.*

They may be taught correct pronunciation and intonation by:

- attending to what is heard in face-to-face interactions using the target language and attempting to imitate some of the sounds or mouth movements using mirrors and voice recordings as stimuli
- imitating and recording sounds with about the right pronunciation and intonation
- imitating short phrases which can be recorded, repeated and self-corrected using voice recordings on a Language Master.

Pupils may be taught to ask and answer questions by:

- giving and receiving favourite objects, sounds or tastes; indicating their personal choices and preferences through eye-pointing, gestures or signs
- naming or signing and choosing real objects in response to a simple question; taking turns to ask or answer questions, *for example, Do you like ...? What is it?*
- asking and answering questions in a foreign language using both concrete and abstract forms.

Pupils may be taught how to start and develop conversations by:

- interacting and turn-taking; making and listening to sounds; attending to silence or pauses; making changes of facial expression in face-to-face conversations
- practising and using greetings and introductions in the target language accompanied by a social gesture, *such as a handshake*; recognising differences and diversities in customs without stereotyping, *for example, from watching videos of people introducing themselves in different cultures*
- combining a small range of phrases with a noun or series of nouns to make simple sentences.

They may be taught ways of varying the target language to suit the context, audience or purpose by:

- learning and using formal and informal greetings appropriately, *for example, 'Salut' or 'Bonjour' in French*
- using formal and informal terms of address *such as 'tu' or 'vous' in French, or 'du' or 'Sie' in German.*

Pupils develop language-learning skills

They may be taught techniques for memorising words and phrases and ways of using contexts and other clues to interpret meaning by:

- associating the beginning and ending of a lesson with a sound of reference or an object of reference
- attributing words heard in a MFL context to a familiar object or event
- associating sounds with the sign or object they represent in a MFL context using self-correcting strategies, *for example, matching a picture to a sound using Language Master cards and recordings.*

Pupils may be taught to use their knowledge of English or another language when learning the target language by:

- recognising, using and imitating words which are similar or the same in both the native and the target language.

They may be taught how to use reference materials appropriately and effectively by:

- accessing information from books and from websites.

They may also be taught to develop their independence in learning by:

- using the target language in mainstream links, after school clubs, holidays or visits abroad.

Pupils develop cultural awareness

Pupils should be able to consider their own culture and compare it with the cultures of the countries and communities where the target language is spoken. They may extend their knowledge of these countries by using DVDs, photographs and pictures accessed through

the internet. They may use the currency of the country in role play and work with authentic materials in the target language. They develop cultural awareness by:

- focusing on similarities and differences between two or more countries, using sounds, smells, tastes, colours, temperatures, videos, photographs, paintings and travel posters
- focusing on pictorial information available from reference books and tourist information centres
- listening to classical, pop and folk music from the chosen foreign country or countries; tasting associated produce, food and drinks
- using role play to ask for and buy food or drink in a café using real currency
- using email or the internet to make connections with other European and non- European countries
- communicating with foreign language speakers visiting the school or their locality
- taking school trips abroad and making links with other schools via the internet.

In considering the experiences of people in these countries and communities, pupils may:

- focus on the works of significant people, *such as composers, painters, inventors and writers*, which provide opportunities for sensory appreciation
- link with schools abroad using EU schemes for exchanging photographs and information
- use the internet and email to communicate with pupils from other countries and to exchange information from school websites.

Performance descriptions

These performance descriptions outline early learning and attainment before level 1 in eight levels, from P1 to P8.

The performance descriptions can be used by teachers in the same way as the national curriculum level descriptions to:

- decide which description best fits a pupil's performance over a period of time and in different contexts
- develop or support more focused day-to-day approaches to ongoing teacher assessment by using the descriptions to refine and develop long-, medium- and short-term planning
- track linear progress towards attainment at national curriculum level 1
- identify lateral progress by looking for related skills at similar levels across subjects
- record pupils' overall development and achievement, for example, at the end of a year or a key stage.

The performance descriptions for P1 to P3 are common across all subjects. They outline the types and range of general performance that some pupils with learning difficulties might characteristically demonstrate. Subject-focused examples are included to illustrate some of the ways in which staff might identify attainment in different subject contexts.

Levels P4 to P8 describe pupils' performance in a way that indicates the emergence of skills, knowledge and understanding in each subject. The descriptions are characteristic of the types of attainment the learners are likely to demonstrate.

P1 (i) Pupils encounter activities and experiences. They may be passive or resistant. They may show simple reflex responses, *for example, startling at sudden noises or movements*. Any participation is fully prompted.

P1 (ii) Pupils show emerging awareness of activities and experiences. They may have periods when they appear alert and ready to focus their attention on certain people, events, objects or parts of objects, *for example, attending briefly to interactions with a familiar person*. They may give intermittent reactions, *for example, sometimes becoming excited in the midst of social activity*.

P2 (i) Pupils begin to respond consistently to familiar people, events and objects. They react to new activities and experiences, *for example, withholding their attention from unfamiliar forms of interaction*. They begin

to show interest in people, events and objects, *for example, smiling at familiar people in familiar circumstances*. They accept and engage in coactive exploration, *for example, focusing their attention, when prompted, on sensory aspects of stories or rhymes in the target language*.

P2 (ii) Pupils begin to be proactive in their interactions. They communicate consistent preferences and affective responses, *for example, reaching out to a familiar person in a new setting*. They recognise familiar people, events and objects, *for example, vocalising or gesturing in a particular way in response to a favourite visitor to their modern foreign languages sessions*. They perform actions, often by trial and improvement, and they remember learned responses over short periods of time, *for example, showing pleasure each time a particular character appears in a story dramatised in the target language*. They cooperate with shared exploration and supported participation, *for example, taking turns in interactions, imitating actions and facial expressions, with a familiar person using the target language*.

P3 (i) Pupils begin to communicate intentionally. They seek attention through eye contact, gesture or action. They request events or activities, *for example, pointing to key objects or people during modern foreign languages sessions*. They participate in shared activities with less support. They sustain concentration for short periods. They explore materials in increasingly complex ways, *for example, reaching out and feeling for objects as tactile cues to events in sessions simulating life in other cultural settings*. They observe the results of their own actions with interest, *for example, listening to their own vocalisations during sessions in which the target language is used*. They remember learned responses over more extended periods, *for example, following the sequence of a familiar routine in modern foreign languages sessions and responding accordingly*.

P3 (ii) Pupils use emerging conventional communication. They greet known people and may initiate interactions and activities, *for example, prompting another person to join in with a familiar interactive sequence in the target language*. They can remember learned responses over increasing periods of time and may anticipate known events, *for example, pre-empting sounds or actions in familiar interactions in the target language*. They may respond to options and choices with actions or gestures, *for example, by nodding or shaking their heads at appropriate*

points during an interaction in the target language. They actively explore objects and events for more extended periods, for example, scanning the pages of a magazine written in the target language. They apply potential solutions systematically to problems, for example, showing or giving an object in response to a request in the target language.

P4 Pupils attempt to repeat, copy or imitate some sounds heard in the target language. They may perform familiar or simple actions on request using repetition, sign or gesture as prompts. They listen and may respond to familiar rhymes and songs in a foreign language.

P5 Pupils attempt one or two words in the target language in response to cues in a song or familiar phrase. They respond to simple questions, requests or instructions about familiar events or experiences. Responses may be through vocalisation, sign or gesture and pupils' responses may depend upon repetition and support.

P6 Pupils respond to others in a group. Their attempts to communicate in the target language may rely heavily upon repetition and gesture, and they may use facial expression and/or intonation to enhance meaning. They communicate positives and negatives in the target language in response to simple questions. They match and select symbols for familiar words, actions or objects presented in the target language.

P7 Pupils introduce themselves by name in response to a question in the target language. They contribute to using the target language for a purpose, *for example, using ICT skills to access the internet and exchange information*, with guidance from other pupils or adults. They listen, attend to and follow familiar interactions in the target language.

P8 Pupils listen attentively and know that the target language conveys meaning. They understand one or two simple classroom commands in the target language. They respond briefly using single words, signs or symbols. They may need considerable support from a spoken model and from visual clues. They may read and understand a few words presented in a familiar context with visual clues. They can copy out a few words with support. They label one or two objects. With some support, they use the target language for a purpose, *for example, requesting items in simulations of real life encounters in the target language.*

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 support materials to schools for planning learning opportunities and activities in modern foreign languages for pupils in each key stage. It includes performance descriptions of early learning and attainment in the national curriculum.

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.

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