

How does Wavertree support children who are low attainers or Children with barriers created by SEND

Differentiation

In making knowledge do its work of strengthening reading, teachers are being inclusive. This means teachers thinking in refreshingly different ways about differentiation. The content may appear challenging, but the moment teacher contemplate not giving pupils access to the core vocabulary and the content that sits underneath it, we exclude them more, not less.

A key goal of the humanities curriculum is to bring many more pupils into the conversation of the lesson and into the knowledge that makes reading possible. If teachers exclude pupils from that knowledge, teachers widen the attainment gap and widen the disadvantage gap.

At Wavertree, teachers encourage all pupils to encounter the stories, repeat the words and participate in recalling them together. We ensure that, any pupil struggling needs *more* practice in the new vocabulary not less.

We recognise, however, that some pupils, because of severely limited prior knowledge or specific barriers, may need extra time and help to access some materials.

How does whole-class teaching help the lower attainers?

Those parts of the lesson where staff are teaching the whole class are crucial for the very low-attainers. They will benefit hugely from:

- building knowledge through oral work. Our most basic aim is for pupils to be ***familiar with the words aurally and orally***, even if written recognition lags behind this. Teachers won't accelerate recognition of the written if they don't have plenty of ***aural*** work (listening) and ***oral*** practice (speaking).
- ***brief spurts of punchy, pacy, whole-class work*** which keep pupils attentive and focused. Like rhymes, poems and songs, the pleasure and satisfaction that comes through being able to join in on choral response, is a key tool in gradually enabling weaker pupils to 'feel' the vocabulary in their ears and on their tongues. Children are more likely to be able to follow the text or enjoy the ensuing story if they have joined in this kind of choral work. The more they can join in, the more the knowledge liberates them by giving them access to what everyone is talking about.
- ***pre-teaching*** of content/specific vocabulary before moving onto the booklet, so that pupils have a positive experience of reading chunks of the text.
- ***checking*** that particular pupils have 'got it' as you go along. Small amounts of information followed by reinforcement and retrieval.
- ***prioritising attention to lower attaining pupils or pupils with SEND*** whenever staff are teaching core vocabulary. Ensure these pupils take part in the choral response so that they hear themselves saying new vocabulary.

How can we give extra practice to the very lowest attainers or to pupils with significant challenges arising from SEND?

When pupils are not in whole-class teaching, that is, when they are working on their own, or perhaps in pairs, some differentiated provision *can* be helpful. We think of it in terms of '**extra practice**' and '**extra access**' rather than alternative input. Staff are not giving them easier work; they are giving them extra input to ensure children understand the thrust of the lesson. Then pupils have more chance of clambering into the main drama and direction of the lesson when whole-class teaching resumes.

A few pupils certainly struggle to tackle even simple tasks such as writing a sentence in response to a question, let alone writing a couple of paragraphs. Some pupils need further reinforcement of the story, concept or process just taught.

Rather than struggling to write a paragraph and not really reinforcing the knowledge or tackling misconceptions in the process, they are better off hearing or rehearsing the knowledge again or differently or having a chance to talk about it with a classroom assistant, or to ask a question about it in order to process it, or to look again at a map or picture and have fundamentals explained again with additional visual reinforcement.

For these reasons, teachers recommend with a very small minority of pupils, where the task the majority of students are doing is difficult or would take so long that the time taken would outstrip its value, one of the following might be useful, depending on the child's needs and available classroom assistant support:

- a missing word exercise.
- simple annotation of a diagram or map, sometimes using pictures.
- matching pictures and definitions.
- drawing (and/or labelling a drawing of) a feature or event.

Often, what certain pupils need is a reiteration of the really big main story (what a glacier is and how it moves) or outline concept ("the water in the river is being spread all over the land!") so that they are at least not confused by fundamentals. For example, a struggling pupil who has not appreciated that the Romans came from Italy to Britain, and cannot yet make meaning out of a map to show those places and people, is going to be very confused about the idea of Britons rebelling against invaders.

For this reason, additional one-to-one teacher input or precious moments with a TA are often best spent not in 'busy work' that isn't actually addressing these confusions, but in simply going over such outline summaries or 'big picture' stories.