

# The Graduated Approach

## Four steps for supporting SEND

The Graduated Approach is a four-part cycle in which earlier decisions, actions and interventions are revisited, revised, and refined through the process of 'assess, plan, do, review (APDR)'. Following this process can help you get a more in-depth understanding of the learner and how best to engage and support them.

For class teachers, applying the graduated approach is quality-first teaching at its finest. This guidance is an introduction to applying this process and is in no means definitive. It is a useful approach when considering if a learner in your class would benefit from greater support but is not identified on your school's SEND register. Try using the questions to shape your thinking in the first 3 phases then leave it a few weeks before reviewing your actions. If necessary, start the process again - or it may be time to discuss this learner(s) with your SENCo or Head of Learning Support.



# Stage 1: Assess



The first step in the graduated approach is gathering information on the learner. Assessment can mean more than scores so cast your net wide!

## School Assessments

What teacher assessments do you have  
Does the learner have any targets?

## Background information

What does the learner's attendance record tell you?

Do they have siblings in the school? What has their learning experience been like?

What does the learner say about their experience of learning?

## Social and Communication

### Observe and record the following:

Observations in the classroom

Interactions with the teacher and other member of staff

Interactions with peers during breaks and lunches

## Classroom practice

### Observe and record the following:

Core literacy and numeracy skills

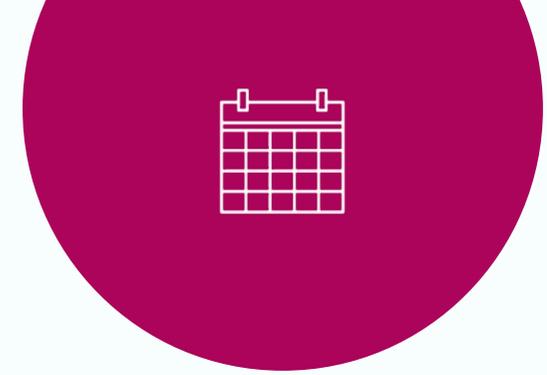
Strategies for working independently

Level of understanding

Time to get started



# Step 2: Plan



This step involves planning an approach which is targeted and focused. You can always repeat this process if the learner has more than one area to work on. Make your target SMART (specific, measured, achievable, relevant, timed) for both you and the learner. Don't forget this is classroom based so the approach shouldn't single out the learner.

## Assessments

How will you measure any progress throughout this intervention?

What will learning look like if this intervention is successful?

## Background information

What has been tried before and is it worth repeating and embedding?

## Social and Communication

Who could support this intervention?  
Consider both teachers and peers.

## Classroom practice

Are there changes you could make to the classroom layout to support them?

Could you identify some resources which you could have in the classroom for them to use? For example, task planners, writing frames, pen grips, coloured overlays.





# Step 3: Do

This is the time to put your plan into action. Make sure you give an intervention or change in practice time before you review it – ideally a minimum of two weeks. We recommend that this cycle takes place over the course of six weeks.

## Assessments

What areas of their learning need further investigation?

Share your thoughts with the SENCo and get their opinion

What would you make the priority for support?

## Background

How would you engage the parents with this classroom intervention?

How can you make the intervention reflect the learner's interests and strengths?

## Social and Communication

Provide strategies to support friendships

List expectations for behaviour

Roles of adults in the room explained and repeated

## Classroom practice

Research and list strategies that may support the learner in class, and put these in place.

DYT's classroom strategies resource would be a good place to start!





# Step 4: Review



Be reflective and consider this as an ongoing learning process, not a success or failure. Use your findings to decide what to do or try next. This might be a referral to the SENCo, developing a one-page profile for the learner, another cycle of the graduated approach, or a return to high quality teaching because a gap in knowledge or skills has been closed.

## Assessments

What progress has the learner made since using the classroom strategies?

If their difficulties are persistent to high quality intervention it may be time to refer them for further, more in-depth assessment

## Background

What were the outcomes of conversations with parents/carers and have any changes supported an improvement for the learner?

## Social and Communication

### Observe and record the following:

Have the changes to classroom practice impacted on other areas of the learner's education?

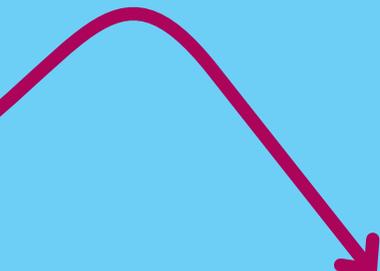
Have you shared any strategies with your colleagues?

## Classroom practice

### Observe and record the following:

Is there anything further that the learner would benefit from?

Are there any scaffolds or supportive practices that could be reviewed in light of progress made by the learner?



At Driver Youth Trust, we believe that every learner deserves an education that is responsive to their literacy needs. We work directly with teachers, TAs, school leaders and governors to equip them with practical and adjustable strategies, frameworks and resources to help them better support learners with dyslexia, literacy difficulties and SEND, and to transform literacy in their classroom.

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