Specialist Unit for Communication and Interaction (C&I):

Description:

Within the SEND Code of Practice communication and interaction is defined as follows:

'Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them, or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. The profile for every child with SLCN is different and their needs may change over time. They may have difficulty with one, some or all of the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives.' (SEND Code of Practice, paragraph 6.29)

The above definition will inform placement of learners in the C&I units.

The descriptions below could refer to a number of pupils in mainstream school. The learners in the unit however are likely to display significant or persistent difficulties in these areas.

Definition of need:

Children may have a speech and language (SLCN) difficulty, or they may have an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and are therefore likely to have associated difficulties with social interaction, imagination and how they relate to others. Communication and interaction needs could include:

- persistent difficulties with producing or responding to expressive or receptive language
- difficulties uttering speech sounds
- significant difficulties understanding spoken and other communications from others
- significantly delayed language development
- difficulties with understanding age-related social conventions of interaction, such as turn-taking during conversations or appropriate level of physical contact during play
- difficulties understanding the social interactive style and emotional expression of staff and peers
- difficulties with the use of social language and the social rules of conversation, including staying on topic
- difficulty understanding and accepting the feelings and emotions of others
- demonstrating a lack of interest in learning or in their peers and possibly displaying negative or challenging behaviours
- significant difficulties in processing information
- marked differences in the way sensory information is processed / sensory integration difficulties

Description of provision:

Examples of strategies likely to be employed are:

- Individual or small group work to focus on specific communication and interaction skills.
- Highly differentiated teaching and learning delivered at an appropriate pace and level.
- Multi-sensory teaching approaches.
- Reactive and adaptive planning for learning.
- Considering adaptations needed to the physical environment to help with access to learning, for example picture labelling of resources, avoiding sensory overload.
- Consideration of specialist IT assessment and resources to support learning, such as Communicate in Print and Clicker.
- Access to individual support as well as learning alongside peers.
- Access to a workstation and use of the TEACHH approach.
- Social skills interventions to develop interaction and to support wellbeing.
- A communication-friendly environment with the use of visual prompts to support understanding, including a visual timetable.
- Use of alternative means of communication such as Makaton and PECS.
- Careful planning for transition – to include the pupil and parent voice.
- Regular multi-agency assessment and reviews of progress (in addition to the annual review of the EHCP).
- Provision of a calm/safe area and a time out facility.
- A risk assessment where appropriate to identify health and safety issues.