

SEN Pupil Perception Interviews by SEND Governor at Stradbroke Primary School 10/03/2020

I had the pleasure of meeting 7 pupils over the course of the day, ranging from year 2 up to year 6 . They were a delightful group of children, and very open and happy to talk to me about their school experience, and tell me of their latest achievements. I will try to summarise the most salient points from the interviews, alongside my own observations.

- Focus can be a difficulty for many children with additional needs – all pupils interviewed report that their T.A and/or teacher helps them to concentrate when they find it difficult, often by breaking up instructions into chunks, helping to sequence and plan how to tackle the task or using gentle reminders of the focus of the task.
- Differentiation is evident when children discuss the subjects they find most difficult, and the ways in which their working is structured in order to support them – effective use of small group work and additional support from T.A's to allow greater time focusing on building key foundational skills in core subjects.
- Differentiation also evidenced by key positioning of pupils within class, sharing tables with peers of similar ability, allowing for good peer-to-peer support.
- Use of specific resources to support individual needs – children report using overlays to help with reading, access to ear defenders to help lessen noise-based anxiety, wobble cushions and movement breaks for those who need a physical release from time to time, fiddle toys to help calm anxiety and aid concentration, Talking Tins to help memory and focus during writing tasks, Clicker to help with writing and spelling, sound mats as a speech and language aid.
- Visual aids are often helpful – visual timetables to help with understanding of what will happen next, both helping to reduce anxiety and supporting steps towards greater independence.
- Flexibility of approach in lessons such as P.E. – one pupil noting that they can find the social aspects difficult and that their teacher has devised an action plan for them to follow should they feel overwhelmed or upset (this takes the form of a pre-agreed structure of taking time out, discussing feelings with T.A before looking to rejoin lesson where possible – all independently accessed by the pupil).
- Input from external professionals such as a dyslexia outreach team and SALT – children talk of these sessions with enthusiasm.

Additional points to note: what comes across very strongly from each pupil, is the extent to which they are catered for as an individual with resources being available to support them in whichever area they most require it. This, combined with a flexibility of approach and an understanding that the children benefit the most from an environment which allows them some control over the aspects they struggle the most with (particular as they move further up the school), fosters a sense of security and an ability to both recognize areas of difficulty whilst being proud of the

wonderful things they have achieved. It is also important to note that all the pupils report that their teachers and peers know what their strengths are, and that these are regularly celebrated – this corresponds to the ethos of inclusivity and support which is evident throughout the school, both in the behavior of the children and the attitudes of the staff.

Some quotes:

“I am really proud of how my reading has improved, and am looking forward to reading harder books next”

“I like to know what is going to happen. If there are going to be any changes, my teacher will talk to me about it first”

“Everyone knows I am good at running and football”

“My soundmat helps me with difficult words”

“I am a good friend”