

## SEN bulletin July 2025

### Message from Madhu

Dear SENCos

As we come to the end of the school year I pause to reflect on all that we have achieved for our children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Gosh what a busy year it has been! For me the highlights have been SENCO clusters, our Secondary Seminars, and working with the Youth Social Network watching our young people grow in confidence and independence.

I hope you are able to find space with your school colleagues to reflect on your highlights for the year.

We are developing another rich training and outreach offer for you and your staff for next year. With OT and SaLT walks continuing, a new network to support schools with their own specialist classes (Wonder/Rainbow rooms), support for TA's and support to run your staff CPD sessions.

I wish you a restful and joyful summer holiday and I thank you for all your hard work and dedication to ensuring our children have a positive experience in all our schools. Your commitment and hard work is valued and recognised by all at ELP and LA, alongside the positive feedback from parents and children.

I look forward to seeing you all in our September SENCo network for both primary and high schools on the 25 September at 1pm at the EEC. [Sign up with Ealing CPD Online](#).

### ELP occupational therapy

*Message from Esther Mellor*

#### Pencil grasp development

This month I'd like to highlight a handy (no pun intended) tip from Pete Blackman (SENCo) and the EYFS team at North Primary School regarding pencil grasp development.

Last week, during a school visit, I observed that Pete and the team stick students' names next to a pictorial representation of stage they are at, to allow for quick and simple tracking over the year. This document is placed discretely for the class staff to refer to.

I mentioned this to SENCos on my following school visits that week and it has now also reached some SENCo Cluster Groups by word of mouth. Shayla Hafeez (SENCo at Tudor Primary School) was inspired by Pete's approach and made a tracking table for her EYFS team, which she shared with me.

I have adapted both of these great ideas and have combined them on to one document - choose which one is best for your setting.

Please do keep sharing resources and good practice with me and your colleagues - it is always a pleasure to see OT principles in action!

[Pencil grasp development trackers](#)

### Speech and language therapy

3 top tips for a communication-friendly classroom next year

From the speech and language therapy team

As you begin planning for the next academic year, we wanted to share 3 top tips to help create a calm, consistent and communication-supportive environment for all learners:

1. Streamline displays - Aim to keep visuals within display boards where possible. This reduces visual overwhelm and helps pupils focus on key information. Also, ensure display fonts are clear and in a large font so that they are easily readable from across the classroom.
2. Carry over your new classes' emotional regulation visual supports - If your new class used emotional regulation visuals last year, please continue with the same system. This consistency avoids children needing to re-learn a new way to communicate and ensures they have familiar strategies from day one.
3. Create a calm space - Provide a space in your classroom where any child can go to regulate. If space is tight, this can double as your reading corner - in fact, having a multi-use area can encourage more children to use it, reducing stigma and promoting emotional regulation for all.

Want to know more? Join OT Esther Mellor and SLT Maddy Burnett on Monday 30 June, 1.30-3.30pm for training on creating a sensory and communication-supportive classroom environment. You can sign up by emailing: [wlm-tr.sltuniversalservices@nhs.net](mailto:wlm-tr.sltuniversalservices@nhs.net)

And finally... Thank you for all of your SLT/CDT JAC referrals this term - please continue to send them in right up until the end of term. Clinics will continue running over the summer holidays.

- [JAC leaflet for parents](#)
- [SLT referral form](#)

### Autism Education Trust: this month's resource

Message from Dawn: You can find Ealing's AET training on Ealing CPD Online as well as here on the AET website:

- [Find Upcoming AET Training | Autism Education Trust](#)
- [Global Search | Ealing CPD Online search AET](#).

We offer bespoke training in your setting and will be pleased to discuss how we can support your staff. Do contact us to discuss this training which is free of charge for many settings: [Outreach@springhallow.ealing.sch.uk](mailto:Outreach@springhallow.ealing.sch.uk)

## Therapeutic Thinking

### Introducing recently appointed Therapeutic Thinking Lead – Dee Higgins



I am delighted to have joined Ealing Council's Children's Services and becoming part of the access and inclusion team. My previous role was deputy head at Ealing Alternative Provision. I have a strong commitment to nurturing inclusive, compassionate, and reflective practices and bring a wealth of experiences and a deep understanding of how therapeutic approaches can transform the way we support our children and young people in Ealing. I am proud to live and work in the communities we serve.

In this role I will be working closely with stakeholders across services including staff, students and family groups to embed the principles of Therapeutic Thinking across children's services and into the community with a vision of creating environments that promote emotional well-being, safety and a sense belonging and positive relationships.

I am passionate about empowering staff with the tools and confidence to respond to behaviour in a way that is thoughtful, consistent and rooted in empathy. Through training, coaching and collaborative planning I want to build Therapeutic Thinking champions in schools and community groups. Building a shared language and culture is paramount to inclusivity and supporting every learner to thrive. Your work in SEND and Inclusion is pivotal in this mission and I look forward to working with you.

I will be sending out information about upcoming network and training events for 2025/6 and I will be approaching SEND leads in schools to support you with your therapeutic journey. Please feel free to contact me on [dhiggins001@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:dhiggins001@ealing.gov.uk).

## SEN governors

Autumn term training in SEND: governing body responsibilities and accountabilities will be Wednesday 22 October 2025, 6 – 7.30pm.

DfE: SEND in England: census data – Share with governors

Latest data on SEND pupils in England, drawn from census information, has been published:

- EHC plans: 482,640 pupils (up by 11.1% from 2024)
- EHC plans (percent): 5.3% (up from 4.8% in 2024)
- SEN support/SEN without an EHC plan: 1,284,284 pupils (up by 3.7% from 2024)
- SEN support/SEN without an EHC plan (percent): 14.2% (up from 13.6% in 2024)
- Over 1.7 million pupils in England have special educational needs (SEN). This is an increase of 93,700 (5.6%) pupils since 2024. This includes the number of pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan and the number of pupils with SEN support, both of which continue the trend of increases since 2016.
- The most common type of need for those with an EHC plan is autistic spectrum disorder and for those with SEN support is speech, language and communication needs.

## Upcoming training and networks

[Schools](#) | [Our Courses](#) | [Ealing CPD Online](#) – browse all courses here.

- [ARP & SRP network](#)
- [Joint secondary SENCO and inclusion leads seminar](#)
- [ELP secondary SENCO network](#)
- [KS1 Preparing for September 2025](#)
- [KS2 Preparing for September 2025](#)
- [ESCP: Reasonable adjustments for learning difficulties, disabilities and autism](#)

[ELP training brochure](#) will be available on the schools section of Ealing CPD Online

## Access and inclusion

Thank-you to Aretha Banton, Assistant director SEND and inclusion, Ealing Council.

### Annual review template - final stages of the project

The project began 18 months ago following QA of EHCP plans and amendments. There was a need to realign the template to the EHCPs and provide further professional guidance for completion. The team worked with schools, parents and young people throughout. These changes are closely aligned with Priority 3 of the SEND strategy, which focuses on the quality assurance of EHCPs. We would like to thank you for your engagement and feedback - we are now in the final stages of co-production.

- 9 June - 4 July: Working group meetings with representatives from each area partnership strand (i.e. health social care, education, young people)

and parents/carers) to ensure we gather final feedback and final edits to the document.

- 7 - 11 July: Final review of the template circulated to all provisions.
- 1 September 2025: The new template is scheduled to be in place by September 2025.

We will continue to work closely with area partners to ensure the effectiveness and smooth implementation of these changes. There is still time to be involved in this project and provide your views. Please contact Justin Brierley or Martina Trifonova if you would like to discuss this further.

## SEN in the news

Jamie Oliver's one-off documentary on Dyslexia has made the news. Meanwhile new data records 1 in 5 pupils getting SEN support. [Record 1 in 5 pupils in England getting special education needs support - BBC News](#)

## Signposts for parents

### Ealing Mencap youth taster sessions

Ealing Mencap has organised a series of pilot youth taster sessions for young people aged 12–25 with learning disabilities and/or additional needs, taking place across Westside and YAC from 23 June to 11 July. Find out more about [Ealing Mencap youth taster sessions](#)

## Did you know?

From the Curriculum and Assessment review interim Report:

Around two-thirds (66%) of young people aged 16-17 are studying towards a level 3 qualification; 15% a level 2 qualification; and 5% a level 1 or below qualification. Of the remaining 16- to 17- year-olds, 4% are in apprenticeships or work-based learning; 5% in employment or other training; and 5% not in education, employment, or training.

Level three qualifications (A levels etc) are not accessible for a third of our learners.

### Contact:

- **SEND consultation line:** [sendline@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:sendline@ealing.gov.uk)

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- [Neutral](#)
- [No](#)

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