

Journal of Trainee Teacher Education Research

Overcoming barriers for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder in Modern Foreign Languages: a critical evaluation of the impact of ASD strategies on the attainment and engagement of learners in a Year 7 class

Eloise Johnson

(PGCE Modern Foreign Languages, 2015-2016)

email: elliejohnson@hotmail.co.uk

Abstract

The increasing presence of pupils with special educational needs in the mainstream classroom is heightening the requirement for teachers to differentiate their practice for the expanding range of needs. This study focusses on one special educational need, Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), in the Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) classroom: a largely unexplored area of research. Focussing on one Year 7 French class, including 2 learners with ASD, in a British comprehensive secondary school, this paper seeks to look at the impact of suggested strategies for facilitating the learning of pupils with ASD in the MFL classroom. A scheme of work was developed, and differences in engagement and attainment were measured throughout. Findings suggest that the benefits on attainment are significant, both for learners with ASD and 'neurotypical' learners. Engagement of the class also improved over the intervention. The study opens up possibilities for future research, including the potential benefit of MFL learning for pupils with ASD, and it highlights the need for a set of comprehensive guidelines for ASD in the MFL classroom.

© Eloise Johnson, 2017

<https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.86179>

Overcoming barriers for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder in Modern Foreign Languages: A critical evaluation of the impact of ASD strategies on the attainment and engagement of learners in a Year 7 class

Eloise Johnson

Introduction

‘Inclusion’ has been an increasingly used term in education since the Special Education Act of 2001, which expressed the ‘duty to educate children with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools’, and therefore the need for teachers to adjust their teaching appropriately (Her Majesty’s Stationery Office (HMSO), 2001, Chapter 10). Given that the physical placement of children with SEN in mainstream schools is not sufficient, (e.g. Ochs, Kremer-Sadlik, Solomon, & Gainer Sirota 2001; Lynch & Irvine, 2009), these adjustments to teaching must be carefully considered to ensure that the 15.4% of children in England with identified SEN are able to fulfil their full potential (Department for Education (DfE), 2015, p.1).

Amongst these children with an identified SEN are well over 93,000 children who experience ‘difficulties in social interaction, communication and imagination, coupled with average or high intellectual and linguistic ability’, often diagnosed as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008, p.23). Policy changes, driven by beliefs such as that grouping together children with ASD in classes may not be useful e.g. (Connor, 1999), and the closure of special schools have led to the rising presence of learners with ASD in the mainstream classroom. Thus, there has been a rising demand for teachers to adjust their teaching for learners with ASD, however, it is clear that how this can be done remains ambiguous, complex, not yet fully understood and scarcely researched (Wire, 2005; Humphrey & Lewis, 2008). Given the nature of ASD as a ‘communication difficulty’, for Modern Foreign Language (MFL) teachers in particular there is a need to consider which strategies may be effective or less effective when teaching learners with ASD, thus providing me with a broad rationale for my research (Pittman, 2007, p.5).

As a trainee teacher of MFL, it is necessary for me to understand how to make adjustments to my teaching and to develop a broad range of methods of differentiation. The need for trainee teachers to extend their differentiation strategies and their knowledge of their pupils is clear. Whilst on placement at an 11-18 rural comprehensive school in Essex, I was able to narrow down this interest to a specific class: 7x, a mixed-ability French class. This class includes two boys with ASD, who, as will later be investigated, have shown some disengagement and lack of attainment in French. I therefore decided to implement some strategies for helping pupils with ASD to learn. Whilst investigating whether this would impact the pupils with ASD, I also sought to ascertain whether these teaching methods could in fact benefit the whole class. Thus, my overarching research aim will be to evaluate the use of some suggested strategies for ASD in the MFL classroom, analysing the impact on the attainment and engagement of all members of the class, with a focus on the two pupils with ASD.

An exploration of the literature that exists regarding differentiation both as a whole and for pupils with ASD, leads to the selection of strategies to test in my French teaching. My literature review consists of a discussion of ASD and the likely implications for MFL learning, both positive and negative. Having arrived at my Research Questions (RQs), my research design explores how I gather my data. Findings from this data are presented and subsequently discussed, leading onto the analysis of any possible conclusions, along with suggestions for further study.

Literature Review

Differentiation

The pedagogical issue at the crux of this research is that of differentiation, thus it is briefly addressed here. Gregory & Chapman (2011, p.7) claims that ‘differentiation has been around since the beginning of school days’, however, one cannot overlook the recently increased need for differentiation, given that, ‘it is a child’s legal right to have a curriculum that is differentiated to meet their needs’ (O’Brian & Guiney, 2001, p.4). A model presented in 1998 by O’Brian (cited in O’Brian & Guiney, 2001, p.4) illustrates the variety of needs of a group, highlighting the three lenses through which to perceive a class – as a whole group, as smaller, distinct groups or as individuals. O’Brian and Guiney go onto emphasise that teachers must be aware that teaching a topic to a whole group may not result in high-quality learning for the entire group, thus

differentiation is required. This is further supported by Vygotsky's (1978, p.86) work, illustrating that an individual student's 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD) is where learning best occurs. The ZPD can be explained as the distance between what a pupil can complete independently and what they can complete with the help of another. Given that the ZPD is unique for all, there is a heightened awareness of the need to differentiate.

The significance of differentiation in practice has been theorised about in depth. Tuchman Glass (2011, p.87) divides it into differentiation of content (essential knowledge), process (method of learning) and product (evidence or assessment). O'Brian & Guiney (2001, p.2) appear to agree, but whilst noting that differentiation can occur through adapting resources, approaches or methods, they also acknowledge the diversity of 'development, attitudes and beliefs' amongst learners. Amongst the literature, Tomlinson's (2001, p.4) argument for 'proactive' differentiation is one which underpins my research into differentiation, as she also portrayed the necessity of adjusting the nature of the work, not just the quantity or end goals.

Differentiation, as Holmes (1994, p.69) summarises, is the realisation and action of the fact that 'every pupil comes to the classroom with differences in experience and attitudes, ability and interests.' How teachers realise and act upon these differences is a controversial and ever-changing domain, as exemplified by the range and quantity of mechanisms for differentiation given by Convery and Coyle (1999), one of multiple guides for differentiation in the classroom. However, the message most relevant to this piece of research is that we, as teachers 'need these differences to work for us, not against us' (Holmes, 1994, p.69). It is this sense of optimism that underpins my research into strategies to help the success of learners with ASD.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder

As a continuing area of psychological research, ASD must be defined with care. The Encyclopaedia of Mental Health defines ASD as 'a neurodevelopmental disorder characterised by difficulties in social communication and the presence of restricted repetitive behaviours and atypical sensory behaviour' (McPartland & Law, 2015, p.124). Despite probably always having existed, autism was first described by Kanner in 1943, shortly followed by Hans Asperger in 1944. At present, the most recent change to diagnosing ASD is that it is now inclusive of the former categories of pervasive developmental disorder, autistic disorder and Asperger's disorder.

To define the key areas of difficulty for those with ASD, the ‘triad of impairment’ has long been referred to: social interaction, communication and flexible thinking (e.g. Wing, 1996). More recent definitions have opted for a ‘dyad of impairments’: social communication and interaction, and restricted behaviours and interests (e.g. Ousley & Cermak, 2013, p.5). Whilst maintaining that the nature of the ‘spectrum’ highlights the wide range of possible characteristics, we must look at some of the most frequently occurring characteristics and how these may impact learners in the classroom.

One half of the ‘dyad’: social interaction and communication, appears to cause pupils with ASD the most difficulty in mainstream school (Wire, 2005; Humphrey & Lewis, 2008; Humphrey & Symes, 2011; Deacy, Jennings & O’Halloran, 2015). Jordan and Powell (1995, p.13) demonstrate the perception of children with ASD as being ‘socially inept’ but go on to show that these social difficulties have ‘a pervasive effect on all aspects of their learning and their behaviour.’ Humphrey & Symes’ research into the frequency and duration of the social interaction of children with ASD at 12 secondary schools involved coding different types of interaction and their frequency in both children with and without ASD over a two day period. Their findings evidenced the perception of many: that ‘participants with ASD spent more time engaged in solitary behaviours, less time engaged in co-operative interaction with peers’ (Humphrey & Symes, 2011, p.397). Perfitt (2013) offers an explanation for this in her exploration of supporting pupils with communication needs. She discovered that the highest stress factor at school for this group of students was ‘social situations involving peers’ (pp.192-3). Discussions with the SEN Coordinator (SENCO) at the school where my study took place indicated that social interaction is a key area of focus for supporting pupils with ASD.

Regarding communication, Jordan and Powell (1995, p.72) in their advice for teaching children with autism, state that ‘it is only in autism that children may acquire language and then have to learn the communication uses for it.’ They explain that whilst many learners with autism have sound structural language ability, it is the social use of language that presents difficulties. It is important to note that between 20% and 50% of individuals with ASD remain mute (ibid., p.53). Pittman (2007) breaks this area down further, exploring three characteristics of children with ASD: literal interpretation, use of emphasis or intonation and echolalia. However, some, none or all of these characteristics may be present in learners with ASD. Having ascertained that social interaction

and communication is an accepted area of difficulty for learners with ASD, we must link this with MFL teaching and learning.

The National Curriculum for Key Stage 3 (KS3) Modern Foreign Languages asks that, in speaking, pupils can ‘make use of important social conventions’ and deal with ‘unfamiliar language and unexpected responses’ (DfE, 2014, p.2). Wire (2005) connects this directly to ASD: ‘learning a foreign language can make a useful contribution to raising an autistic pupil’s awareness of social skills’ (p.124). She refers to Littlewood’s (1998) discussion of the role of extroversion in learning a second language, indicating that less extrovert learners may find learning a language challenging. This is due to the natural desire of more extrovert learners to engage in social action, which, for foreign language learning, represents learning opportunities. It is therefore essential that lessons are designed to help and not hinder the social development of all students, including those with ASD.

It remains arguable that ‘the learning styles of those with autism could not easily be accommodated’ in mainstream school (McGregor & Campbell, 2001, p.202). Given the nature of ASD and the difficulties often experienced with acquiring their first language (L1), many may question the placement of learners with ASD in MFL lessons. However, the role of MFL for speech and communication difficulties is beginning to be explored. Wire (2005) for instance highlights the vital role of MFL learning for ‘“regularising” delivery and speech patterns’ and also explores strategies for dealing with learners whose communicative ability is extreme (either mute or very talkative) (p.126). Barber (1996) provides a more specific example, portraying the integration of a pupil with Asperger Syndrome into a mainstream school, where the MFL department helped to design a scheme of work which would help his global communication skills. The success of this project, exemplified by the boy’s ‘A’ in GCSE French, provides an early but useful case study for the potential value of MFL teaching for learners with ASD.

As noted, individuals with ASD may have complex educational and psychological needs, so it is important not to generalise, but it is necessary to understand the likely difficulties, in order to design an appropriate intervention. To better understand which aspects of ASD might specifically impact MFL teaching, I received training from an Educational Psychologist from the Essex Educational Psychology Service. It was highlighted that amongst various psychological models which outline the functioning of people with ASD, that of Weak Central Coherence is perhaps most relevant. To summarise, a ‘neurotypical’ individual will process information at a global level,

whereas, often for those with ASD, local detail is given more attention than global (Happé & Frith, 2006; Frederickson & Cline, 2009). This may be of specific interest to MFL teachers given that this means that difficulties may arise in the application of knowledge to other situations or in the understanding of implied meaning. This provides evidence for how pointing out exactly what is to be learnt is essential for successfully teaching learners with ASD.

A final matter to address links into the second half of the dyad: restricted behaviours and the lack of flexible thinking. A regularly occurring and a commonly known trait of some with ASD is that of a difficulty with change. Gregory and Chapman (2011, p.4), without particular reference to ASD, demonstrate that ‘students living in fear cannot learn,’ given that elevated levels of stress take over the cognitive functioning of the brain, reducing its efficiency. For multiple reasons, young people with ASD are more prone to anxiety or depression, in particular those who are ‘high-functioning’ as proven by research (Kim, Szatmari, Bryson, Streiner & Wilson, 2000; Goodall, 2015;). These two factors combined (susceptibility to anxiety and the barrier of stress to learning) highlight the care that should be taken when teaching pupils with ASD, and the need for a safe learning environment. This need for consistency and predictability is relevant both in MFL teaching and across the curriculum. This is a particularly essential risk to bear in mind at the beginning of secondary school, given the complexity of the post-primary environment. Many have researched the stress and anxiety experienced by children with ASD at this phase in education: Goodall (2015, p.321) paraphrases a parent describing mainstream school as ‘akin to her child being educated at the side of a busy motorway.’ Deacy et al. (2015, p.293) portray the move from primary to secondary as a ‘critical milestone’ and note the importance of managing this transition for future development.

ASD in Modern Foreign Languages

Before examining the differentiation strategies that may be implemented to facilitate the learning of students with ASD in MFL, it is worth noting some of the strengths that these learners may manifest. Similarly to Pittman’s (2007, p.5) ‘triad of opportunity’, Wire (2005, p.127) strove to ‘contradict the widespread view that [learners with ASD] are unlikely to make progress in a foreign language.’ She employed her extensive experience to consider the implications of ASD in MFL lessons, leading onto the suggestion of some strategies. As mentioned, learners with ASD often focus on the local detail and many have very good memory for detail. Learning vocabulary and grammar structures is often a difficult aspect of MFL learning for ‘neurotypical’ learners. It seems

natural to make the most of this talent; however, the barrier to overcome may be that of communication and interaction. The strengths of some learners with ASD are clear in Wire's research, who showed that some pupils 'go over and over familiar material' whilst others 'become quite excited about returning to familiar phrases, sequences, drills, games, numbers and lists' (ibid., p.127). Lightbown and Spada (1999) note that the characteristics of a 'good language learner' are not always clear, stating that 'it remains difficult to predict' how characteristics influence language learning success (pp.43,75). Therefore, we must accept that, like any pupil, pupils with ASD have strengths, weaknesses and the potential to be successful linguists, and teachers must find and foster these strengths.

When ascertaining how a teacher can differentiate their teaching for learners with ASD, it is worth noting the lack of research and advice, perhaps given the only recent growth of learners with ASD in mainstream schools and MFL classrooms. I will mainly employ three sources to discuss the various recommendations: Wire's (2005) research, a guidance document from the Essex County Council (2013) and the North West Regional SEN Partnership's (NW SEN Partnership) (2004) strategies for autism in MFL.

Few sources fail to note the importance of routine and structure for learners with ASD. NW SEN Partnership (2004) emphasises giving one instruction at a time. Moreover they mention the 'need to highlight main points and important information' (p.21). Goodall (2015) suggests 'chunking' instructions, to avoid processing difficulties excluding the learner from the lesson (p.322). To further support this, the training I received from Essex Educational Psychologist Service in 2016 also highlighted the need to 'tell them exactly what I'd like them to learn'.

To complement the clarity of instructions, Wire (2005, p.126) insists on the importance of a 'tightly structured classroom', 'repeated greetings and predictable routines.' This consistency can result in a calm environment in which many learners with ASD can flourish, thus avoiding the stressful 'motorway' sensation, as referred to. Given the recent transition into secondary school for the learners in my study, this is central. Once a classroom routine is established and enacted, classroom teaching can also be adapted to facilitate the needs of learners with ASD. To strengthen the impact of the clear instructions previously mentioned, the modelling of activities (arguably a vital MFL teaching strategy) is of particular use to learners with ASD, as Wire indicates.

Two of the most prominent suggestions are the use of visuals and the use of pairings. Thus these will form the centre of my strategy in teaching pupils with ASD. In her recommendations for teaching children with ASD, Pittman (2007, p.41) claims that good use of visuals should signify that the message can be understood rapidly ‘without any language being used verbally to explain it.’ Holmes (1991) speaks of the importance of consistency with visuals, using the same symbols throughout a topic, to achieve maximum success. Both the guidelines from Essex County Council and NW SEN Partnership state the importance of visual support, be it through colour, images or artefacts.

Whilst accepting the difficulties experienced by learners with ASD in social interaction, effective pair work is often deemed essential to MFL success. NW SEN Partnership (2004) summarises this, showing how a difficulty with turn-taking is often central to why conversations are ‘fraught with difficulties’ (p.20). Meanwhile, the National Curriculum for Modern Languages at KS3 (DfE, 2014) places value on communication amongst peers for learning, as developing conversations is central to language learning. Lightbown and Spada (1999) demonstrate how Vygotsky’s theory and the interaction hypothesis place value on language learning through interaction. They also illustrate how ‘second language learners acquire language when they collaborate and interact with other speakers’ (pp.47-8). Naturally this may present difficulties for any learner with communication difficulties, thus when choosing pairings for groups, care must be taken. Wire (2005) describes the type of student with whom not to pair a learner with ASD: ‘anyone who may agitate and frighten this pupil disproportionately’ (p.125). Whilst this is not always possible to predict, if we are to expect positive outcomes from pairings in MFL, pairings must be thought through with care. Humphrey and Symes (2011) explore the vitality of ‘having peers who are committed to developing positive relationships’ given that this ‘may serve to reduce feelings of distrust of other children’ (p.411).

Having explored Autistic Spectrum Disorder in depth, and examined the available literature regarding ASD in mainstream MFL lessons, I was able to produce a research design. My specific interest lies with a particular Year 7 class and the needs of two boys within this class. Thus, by combining this with existing research and literature, I have constructed the following research questions (RQ):

RQ 1: What is the impact of new strategies on the engagement of the learners with ASD in this classroom?

RQ 2: What is the impact of new strategies on the attainment of the learners with ASD in this classroom?

RQ 3: What impact do these strategies have on the learning of the rest of the class?

Research design

Context

This study, took place during Spring Term in a mixed, comprehensive school in Essex. The class with which the study was undertaken was a mixed-ability, Year 7 French class of 26 students. This group had been studying French for three hours a fortnight since the beginning of Year 7. A number of pupils were dyslexic, but the focus for me was two boys (Pupil A and Pupil B) with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, both high-functioning. The objectives of my research were to implement recommended strategies for pupils with ASD in MFL, to see the potential gains in attainment or engagement, and to also see if these strategies could benefit others in the class.

RQ1 and RQ2 were both centred on the two learners in the class with ASD, thus it is also necessary to provide a brief profile of both boys. Both were 11 years old at the time of the research. Pupil A has a diagnosis of ASD, and his main difficulties lie in speech and communication, and he goes through periods of muteness. Pupil B has the same diagnosis, however he is a particularly verbal boy, with his main noticeable area of difficulty in fine motor skills and handwriting. I was allowed access ‘Next Steps Planning’ documentation for both pupils that detailed areas of required support for both of them, thus providing me with additional background information.

Action Research Approach

This study can be categorised as action research, given that it can be classified as ‘a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world’ (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p.186). Denscombe (2014) adds that action research projects are often ‘hands-on’ (p.147) and ‘practitioner-driven’ (p.151). He acknowledges the limitation with regards to generalisability, showing that

findings may not always be able to contribute on a broader scale. However, as Somekh and Noffke (2009) illustrate, action research is a ‘powerful model of bottom-up improvement for schools and practitioners’ (p.522). Denscombe (2014) summarises by highlighting the belief that ‘change is good’ and it is this desire for constant reflection and improvement, even on a small-scale, that defines an action research project (p.149).

Ethical Considerations

The rough outline and aims of my research were explained to the class and full discussions were held with staff at the school to obtain permission for all stages of the research to be carried out. However, due to the sensitive nature of my research project the specific nature of the project could not be explicitly revealed to the class. Nonetheless, in accordance with the British Education Research Association (BERA) guidelines (2011), permission was sought from all participants before interviews were carried out and my intervention with the class took place solely in allocated French lesson time. Attainment data is not anonymised due to the fact that these assessments were routine and the data is needed for progress tracking. Nonetheless, the information I present as part of this project is anonymised. Moreover, despite the change in teaching methods, the scheme of work and assessment formats remained unchanged to avoid any disruption, given that ‘the best interests of the child must be the primary consideration’ (BERA, 2011, p.5).

Teaching Sequence

From research previously explored, and from the individual ‘Next Steps Planning’ strategies for Pupils A and B, I designed a plan for the teaching of ‘Clic’ 1 (a KS3 French textbook) Unit 4. The potential inconsistency, and thus stress provoked by the change of teacher for the boys involved (Kim et al. (2000); Deacy et al. (2015)) was avoided by them being made aware well in advance and by my teaching of the majority of the previous unit of work. It would have been useful for me to have taught the entirety of Unit 3, but this is an unavoidable limitation of my research.

The six-week sequence of lessons to cover Unit 4 presented time constraints, given the large quantity of vocabulary needing to be covered by the end of the unit. This unit involved introducing students to the weather, regions, directions, house description and items in the bedroom, as can be seen in my medium-term plan for the unit (Appendix I).

One of the initial interventions I planned, arising from both the literature (Wire, 2005; Humphrey & Symes, 2011) and advice from the school's SENCO, was to introduce a new system of pairs. Given that lessons are timetabled in three different rooms, seating plans had not been used, however a system of pairs could provide some consistency for the boys and for all. This also allowed for me, with guidance from literature, the class teacher and the SENCO, to design pairs. Pairs were mixed gender in general, and chosen using data and knowledge of friendships to avoid potentially problematic pairing and to increase confidence in pair speaking activities. In practice, after discussions, I ensured that Pupil A would be placed in a group of three, as it was felt this would be less intense for him, relieving some of the pressure to communicate.

The general nature of my teaching had to be tweaked to ensure that sufficient routine and modelling were used, and that instructions were clear, given one at a time (NW SEN Partnership, 2004; Wire, 2005). To a certain extent, it is arguable that this is synonymous with good practice. However, I ensured that my instructions were clear and well-planned and that I was consistent in my routines and greetings with the class, such as with the use of a '3,2,1' countdown to silence, whereas previously a range of techniques and greetings had been used (see Lesson Observation, Appendix II).

The first topic dealt with was weather, taught with the use of symbols (Appendix III) and guided by Holmes' (1991) suggestions, who stated that: 'The symbol convention introduced in the presentation phase gives continuity and makes all of the follow-up activities more accessible without constant recourse to English' (p.16). The symbols used to teach the weather were repeated into a variety of activities, including dominoes, beat the teacher, a listening exercise, and are also in their books where they noted down vocabulary. The re-visiting of these symbols through both speaking and writing activities ensured they were engrained, before moving on to 'ma région' (my region). During the teaching of 'ma région' and 'ma maison' visuals were used to introduce the new vocabulary items and the class participated in speaking activities focussed on the boys' need for collaborative and communicative learning activities. Following a short piece of writing on 'ma maison', pupils were introduced to the rooms of the house, again using visuals, role play and structured pair work. Throughout, it was ensured that pupils were told exactly what it was they needed to know, lessons were not ambiguous or unclear, as had been advised by numerous sources (e.g. during in-school training and Wire (2005)). With this teaching intervention in place, I then developed data collection methods to measure engagement and attainment.

Data Collection

My research was designed around these RQs, using a range of qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data. I was interested in both the engagement and attainment of the two boys with ASD in my class. However my third RQ was more holistic, investigating the impacts on the entire group. These aims, along with guidance from both Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013) and Denscombe (2014), informed me in the development of the following data collection methods. Table 1 shows the methods of data collection relevant to each of my RQs.

Research question	Data Collection
RQ 1: What is the impact of new strategies on the engagement of the learners with ASD in this classroom?	Questionnaires Observations Interviews
RQ 2: What is the impact of new strategies on the attainment of the learners with ASD in this classroom?	Assessments (before and after intervention) Observations Pupil productions
RQ 3: What impact do these strategies have on the learning of the rest of the class?	Assessments (before and after intervention) Interviews Questionnaires

Table 1: Table showing the data sources for each research question.

Questionnaires

Questionnaire 1 (Appendix IV) was carried out before my intervention began, and Questionnaire 2 (Appendix V) was conducted towards the end of the intervention. The underlying purpose of these questionnaires was to gather comparable data to compare opinions, engagement and enjoyment of French before and after my teaching of Unit 4. The format of the second questionnaire was different to the first, in order to avoid pupils completing the same questionnaire twice.

Pupils were asked to numerically rate a selection of activities, aiming to illustrate their overall engagement and enjoyment in French lessons. Amongst these activities were those which my intervention would focus on. It was also necessary to gather data for pupil's overall engagement with French, therefore a plethora of activities were included. I followed Denscombe's (2014) suggestion to begin with the most straightforward questions, and then moved into more open, complex questions. These open questions related to their opinions on pair work and speaking, the activities at the centre of my intervention. I was also interested to ascertain which activities they found most difficult. These open questions allowed pupils to provide more thoughtful answers and

to develop anything they wished to, which would hopefully ‘reflect the full richness and complexity of the views held by the respondent’ (Denscombe, 2014, p.204). In essence, the questionnaires acted as one of a range of data collection methods which would eventually provide me with a well-informed overview of the children’s engagement with French lessons.

The Likert scale provided a basis for developing the first half of my questionnaires, based on quantitative responses, in which pupils were asked to rate activities out of nine. Cohen et al. (2013) show that difficulties may arise from different interpretations of what each number would represent, therefore I would suggest including more clarification in future questionnaires. However, I was aware of the potential issues highlighted (ibid.), who showed that participants’ interpretations of questions may be varied and inconsistent, and that there is therefore a need to ‘refine their contents, wording, length etc. as appropriate for the sample being targeted’ (p.209). Thus, the questionnaire was kept relatively simple.

Similarly, there is a risk of pupils hurrying through a questionnaire and not thinking carefully about their answers. I attempted to follow Denscombe’s (2014) advice and ‘gauge how many questions can be included before the respondent is likely to run out of patience and consign the questionnaire to the waste bin’ (p.199). I also expressed the importance of the questionnaire to pupils. Questionnaire 2 was carried out in class, whereas Questionnaire 1 was a homework. If I were to repeat the study, I would ensure there was time to complete both in class, as this would signify that all data was gathered after a lesson. However, potentially the completion of questionnaires at home would allow for better general reflection and would avoid the impact of peers or the specific lesson.

Staff Interviews and Observations

I conducted interviews with members of staff, in order to better inform my intervention, and to gauge the impact. My interview with the school’s SENCO and Educational Psychologist served the purpose of developing my awareness of ASD and of the specific pupils in my class. I conducted interviews with the class teacher both before and after the intervention. The initial interview was designed to improve my understanding of the pupils I was working with and to ascertain what, if any, strategies for ASD were already being used. The interview after my intervention was also semi-structured, and aimed to provide me with rich qualitative data for RQs one and three.

My interviews with the class teacher were based around her observation notes from my teaching, and whilst being aware of the issue of the ‘selective perception of observers’, it was useful to liaise with someone who knew the children so well (Denscombe 2014, p.204). Before observing, the teacher was made aware of what to focus her notes on: the engagement of all pupils, particularly Pupils A and B. I asked her to note participation and behaviour issues, which would allow me to keep track of engagement levels over the intervention. All of the above interviews were semi-structured, as, despite having pre-prepared points of discussion, I was ‘prepared to be flexible in terms of the order in which the topics [were] considered’ (ibid., p.175).

Pupil Interviews

I opted for group interviews for the pupils, deciding that it may be the most effective method of judging whether their opinions of French had changed over the intervention period, and whether this was due to the ASD strategies. Pupils with a range of abilities were selected for the interview (their entries in Appendix XII are highlighted). Cohen et al. (2013, p.433) highlight that ‘group interviewing with children enables them to challenge each other and participate in a way that may not happen in a one-to-one, adult-child interview.’ It emerged that it would be necessary to conduct a one-on-one interview with Pupil A, as I felt the need to create a space in which he would feel able to voice his opinions. This did not prove to be necessary for Pupil B. Interviews (Appendix VI) with all children were more structured, as I had ‘a predetermined list of questions’, as it was necessary to stay focussed due to time constraints (Denscombe 2014, p.174). However the interviews were still categorized as semi-structured, given the open questions and the room for some unstructured conversation. With the consent of all involved, my interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed, in order to allow me to analyse them more effectively.

These interviews represented a less significant data collection method, but I felt it necessary to include them in order to complement the other data collection methods, for multiple reasons, including that engagement is not always easy to confirm through just observations. When conducting the interviews with the children, I was aware of the ‘interviewer effect’, as highlighted by Denscombe (2014, p.193). In hindsight, I could have considered asking another member of staff to conduct the interviews, so that I could be sure of their validity. Nonetheless, it was necessary and useful to conduct interviews, to provide me with rich qualitative data for all three RQs.

Pupil Productions

For my second RQ, it was essential for me to gauge any change in classwork and homework for Pupils A and B, as this would provide me with another method of judging whether the intervention had improved their attainment in French. Assessments were of course vital for allowing quantifiable evidence of improvement for pupils A and B, however, to further strengthen my findings it proved useful to also analyse work not completed under test conditions, in particular for Pupil A, who particularly struggled with anxiety in tests.

Assessment

In order to address RQs two and three, it was necessary to carry out assessments before and after the intervention. Assessment methods, content and marking had to be carried out in line with the department's assessment procedures. Therefore, the school's levelling system was used for the marking of these assessments, as was the school-wide system of 'Challenge Checkpoints' for feedback. At the end of Unit 3, pupils completed assessments in listening, reading and writing. Due to both time constraints and departmental assessment schedules, Unit 4 assessments were listening, writing and speaking. I would therefore be provided with one level for Unit 3 and 4 (average of 3 skills). Assessing skills in such a way is both useful and necessary; however a clear limitation proved to be that attainment usually increases between assessments, due to natural linguistic progression, or external influences. I therefore had to be cautious about whether any change was caused by my intervention and therefore I employed a range of data collection methods. To measure improvement, I would later compare the change from Unit 2 to 3, compared to that between 3 and 4.

Findings

RQ 1: What is the impact of new strategies on the engagement of the pupils with ASD in this class?

My data to judge whether the new strategies had impacted on the engagement of pupils A and B centred on their questionnaire ratings of how much they enjoyed a range of activities in French lessons. Figures 1 and 2 portray the enjoyment ratings collected through questionnaires before and after the intervention, for pupils A and B, respectively.

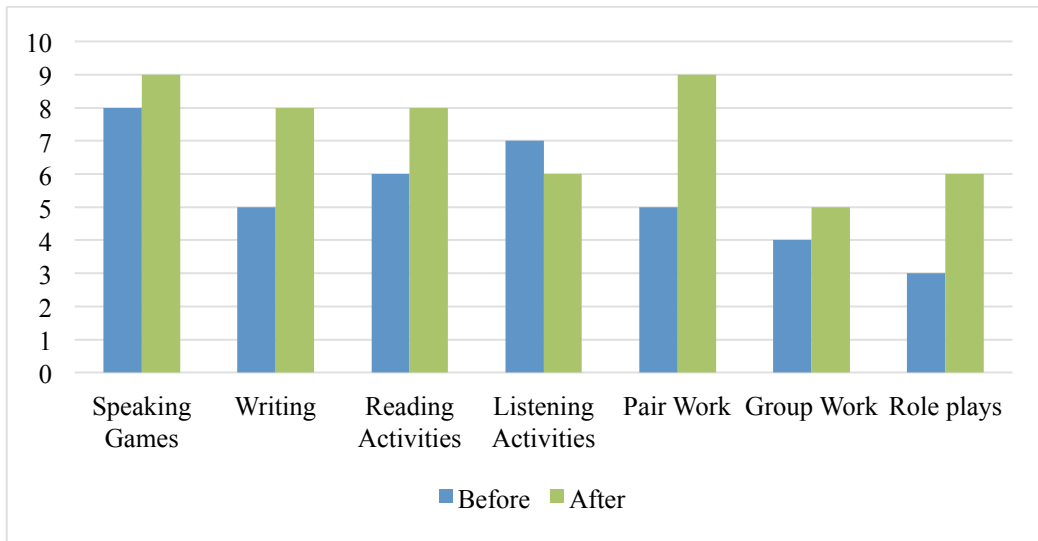


Figure 1: Graph to show enjoyment rating given by Pupil A before and after the intervention

Informal interviews with the class teacher and the observation notes (Appendix VII) concurred with my observation of Pupil A’s increased participation. It was noted that he was answering questions in lessons with increased frequency and confidence. The class teacher noted that he occasionally needed prompting from peers for some activities, but for others he was very engaged.

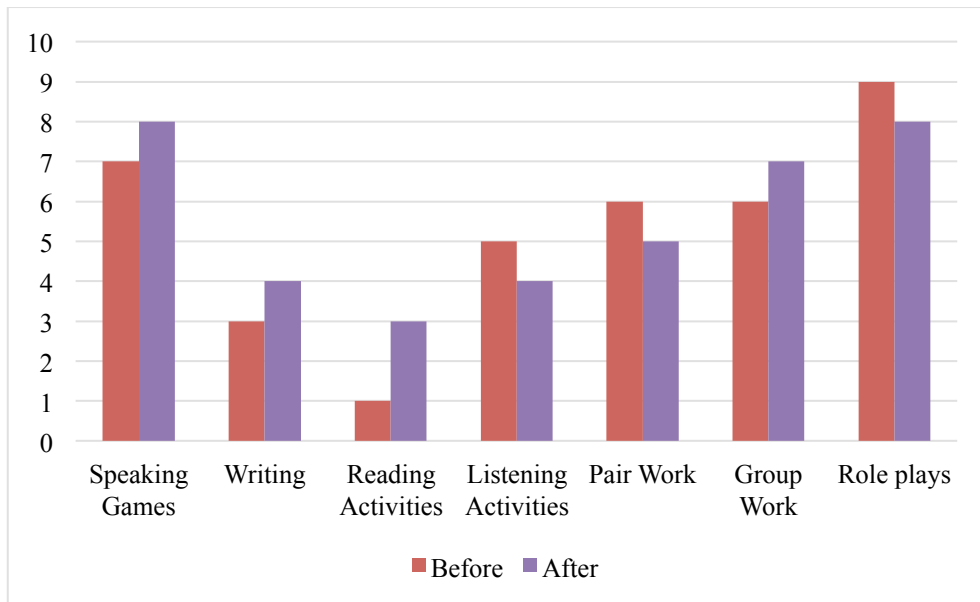


Figure 2: Graph to show enjoyment ratings given by Pupil B before and after the intervention

For Pupil B, the questionnaire data shows an increased enjoyment for many activities (n = 4), and a decreased enjoyment for others (n = 3). His responses to the open questions further portray the complexity of his opinions, as in Questionnaire 1 he stated that ‘I find speaking activities a challenge and sometimes, but not always, they help me learn’ and described pair work as ‘prone to being overused.’ After the intervention, he expressed in the group interview that he had very much preferred the Unit 4 lessons to those of Unit 3, but struggled when expressing why. He still claimed to find pair work and speaking activities difficult sometimes but said he enjoyed ‘all the activities with the pictures’ in lessons. Moreover, the class teachers’ observation notes (Appendix VII) are clear, using expressions such as ‘super engaged,’ ‘loved it’ and ‘massive smile’ to describe Pupil B throughout the lesson.

RQ 2: What is the impact of new strategies on the attainment of pupils with ASD in this class?

Pupil A

The main method of measuring attainment used in this research was the use of the end of unit assessments. Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate the difference in attainment for pupils A and B over the course of the intervention. Data collected from Pupil A’s performance over the three assessments illustrates that between Unit 2 and 3, he made negative progress (-1) in his levels. However, after the intervention in Unit 4, he increased from a Level 2c to 3c (an increase of 3). His written tests (Appendix VIII) may show his increased ability to write longer sentences. The amount he wrote without further prompting doubled from one assessment to the next, suggesting a better grasp of the topic.

In the listening assessments, Pupil A increased from a level 1a to 2b, an increase of two levels, due to both the increased complexity of the Unit 4 listening test and more correct answers. It must be noted that in both assessments, he left approximately 50% of the questions unanswered.

	Unit 2 U2	Unit 3 U3	Unit 4 U4		U2-U3 change	U3-U4 change
Pupil A	2b	2c	3c		-1	+3

Table 2: Attainment of Pupil A

To complement this quantitative evidence, a brief analysis of examples of classwork or homework he produced over the two units can help to suggest his increased understanding of the topic. In some

ways for this particular pupil, work completed not under test conditions is a good gauge of his attainment, as the factor of anxiety is removed. His work could show increased understanding of the topics covered in Unit 4, given his longer and more accurate responses to homework tasks (Appendix IX).

Pupil B

Despite some ambiguity in his engagement, Table 3 below demonstrates Pupil B's increased attainment over the taught units. Between Unit 2 and Unit 3, his level increased by one, however the teaching intervention provoked an increase of four levels (from level 2b to 3a), the highest out of the group. Closer analysis of his writing assessments (Appendix X) shows that in both tasks, his French was very accurate, but in the second assessment he was able to write in more detail and also remembered to write about everything he was asked to (in the Unit 3 writing assessment he left out one of the four points), hence the higher level given. The recurring mistake in his Unit 4 assessment was a misunderstanding, as he had looked up 'it' in the dictionary, and had found 'informatique' (Information Technology). Aside from this, his work was very accurate and he was able to write a sentence using the conditional tense about his dream house. In the listening assessments, Pupil B increased from 2b to 3c, an increase of two levels, simply given his increased level of response to the questions.

	Unit 2 U2	Unit 3 U3	Unit 4 U4		U2-U3 change	U3-U4 change
Pupil B	2c	2b	3a		+1	+4

Table 3: Attainment of Pupil B

Pupil B's formatively assessed classwork and homework over the two units showed less change, as writing is a particular strength of this pupil. Notes were always taken from lessons and he completed all tasks well, showing natural progression as more material was covered.

RQ 3: What impact do these strategies have on the work of the rest of the class?

In order to analyse data from the pre and post-intervention questionnaires completed by the whole class, the average for each activity was taken, given the limitation of absences. A summary of the results can be found in the Appendix XI.

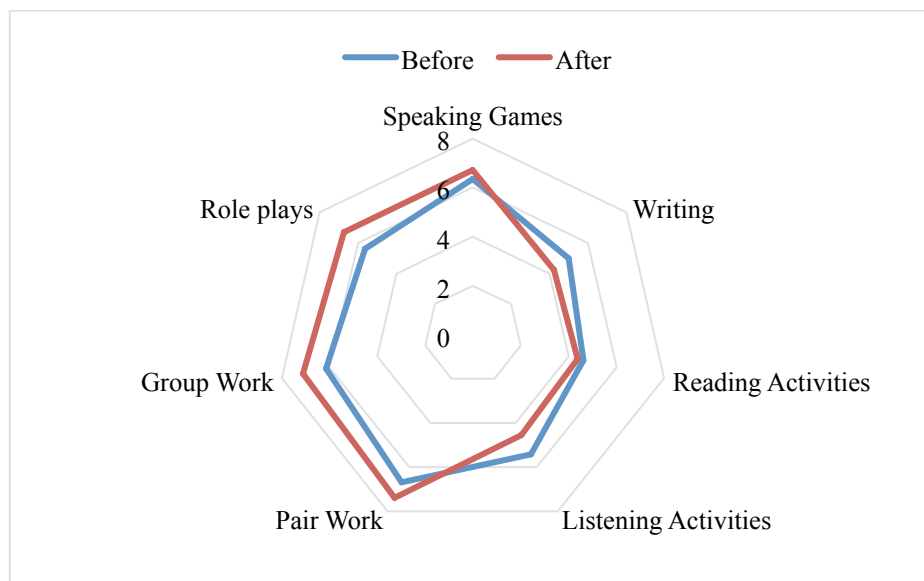


Figure 3: Whole class enjoyment of activities in French lessons

Figure 3 shows that, whilst the average enjoyment of speaking games increased by just 0.44, some activities declined ($n = 3$) and others ($n = 3$) increased by roughly one. The change in enjoyment for any activity over the course of the intervention did not exceed +1.09 or -0.87.

The open questionnaire questions reflected some interesting changes. In the initial questionnaire seven (out of 21 respondents) stated that they found speaking activities or role play the most challenging activities. However in the second questionnaire, two out of 18 claimed that this was the case. A group interview was conducted with six of the class. Responses to the question ‘Did you prefer the topic of school or the one about where you live?’ were unanimous, with all six respondents stating that the Unit 4 topic (where you live) was their preferred topic. The other questions were used to explore why this was. A pupil who attained level 3c in the Unit 4 assessment, thus lower attaining in this class, stated: ‘I liked the symbols to learn the weather because it made it easier to remember.’ Another claimed that he didn’t like dominoes with the symbols because of the time pressure, but that he liked ‘all the pictures’ for learning the rooms of the house. When asked about their ‘French pairs’, all pupils responded positively, with one girl stating ‘it’s fine as long as you like them!’

Results from the end of unit assessment (Appendix XII) show the increase in levels of all students from Unit 3 to Unit 4, as would be expected. The significance of this data was found when finding the average increase in levels from Unit 2 to 3 and Unit 3 to 4, as is set out in Table 4.

Average increase U2-U3	Average increase U3-U4
0.863636	2.181818

Table 4: Average increase in levels between units (all students)

Discussion

My research aimed to analyse whether suggested strategies for facilitating the learning of pupils with ASD could increase the attainment and engagement of two pupils in this Year 7 class. An additional aim was to ascertain whether these strategies had a positive impact on the rest of the class. It is of course vital to note that the sample of students here (26) is too small to be able to suggest that my findings will be widely applicable, and this difficulty in generalisability is noted by Denscombe (2014). Nonetheless, as Pittman (2007, p.5) discusses, ‘the predictable patterns of thinking and behaviour that people with autism share provide a clear commonality.’ Thus, there are grounds to suggest that my findings for the two pupils with ASD have the potential to be further verified if further study was conducted.

The significant attainment increases (+3 and +4) of both Pupil A and B, implies that, for them, the intervention was successful. Yet, it is vital to acknowledge alternative factors which may have led to this increase. As previously mentioned, natural linguistic progression must always be considered in any research into second language learning. As mentioned, it is often said that people with ASD often struggle with change (e.g. Kim *et al*, 2000; Goodall, 2015). This may have impacted the results of Unit 3, as it was during this Unit that there was a transition from the original teacher to me.

Engagement was measured, and Pupil A’s engagement and confidence increased convincingly over the teaching intervention, illustrated by questionnaire data and observations. Pupil B’s engagement showed less clear improvement than that of Pupil A. A noticeable finding was that Pupil B’s enjoyment of pair work decreased slightly over the course of the intervention. There are a variety of factors to consider here, including the difficulty of measuring engagement. Potentially this is due to

the specific pairing or due to the lesson preceding this questionnaire. Despite pair work being portrayed as important (e.g. Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Wire, 2005; Humphrey & Symes, 2011), it may not always be enjoyable. I was aware from Pupil B's 'Next Steps Planning' that he was given support to help him with peer communication. However given his attainment change (an increase of 4), it may nonetheless have had a positive impact. This provides scope for further research, as the literature notes the importance of effective pairing, but there is room to investigate the impacts of different pairings on the engagement and attainment of the pupils.

Figure 3 illustrated the change in all pupils' responses to how much they enjoyed each activity. Despite the small change, the activities which they enjoyed more after Unit 4 were the activities that the teaching sequence had focussed on (e.g. pair work). Moreover, the group interview suggested that pupils enjoyed Unit 4 more than Unit 3. Both Pupil B and other members of the class mentioned the visuals when explaining their increased enjoyment. The use of consistent visuals was mentioned as being a crucial strategy for teaching pupils with ASD (e.g. Holmes, 1991; Pittman, 2007) but this appears to have been useful for other learners (generally of low attainment) in the group too.

We cannot assume that the increased engagement and attainment was solely due to the strategies for pupils with ASD. It must be noted that given that large amounts of time and thought were put into the planning of Unit 4, the lessons may simply have been more enjoyable. Suggestions explored in my literature review, such as clarity of instruction (e.g. NW SEN Partnership (2004)), modelling activities and having repeated routines (e.g. Wire, 2005), are arguably good practice for any MFL teacher, and this may be evidenced in this research. This would also help us to reason why the attainment of the group increased by so much more between Units 3 and 4 (mean: 2.18), compared to between Units 2 and 3 (mean: 0.86).

Similarly to the potential impact of the teacher transition on pupils A and B during Unit 3, it may also have impacted the rest of the class. It is fair to admit that my relationship with the group was much better during Unit 4, simply due to time spent with them. If I were to repeat the study, it would be useful to spend a unit of work getting to know a class before then teaching them 2 full units, to eliminate this possible limitation. Another change would be in the analysis of the attainment data, as it would have been useful to compare the data to that of another class, because

the larger increase in levels between Units 3 and 4 may be more common occurrence than just for this class.

Another change to consider would be to ask a lesson observer to keep a tally on the participation rates of the two pupils in focus (as suggested by Denscombe, 2014). This would provide me with more quantitative evidence on the engagement of the pupils. Given the young age of the participants, this more frequent measurement of engagement would have provided a better overview, as opposed to questionnaires which could be highly dependent on other factors, including the mood of the child, peers or the current lesson. It may have also been useful to quantify sanctions given over the teaching of the two units, to gauge whether behaviour was better, thus potentially reflecting engagement.

A potential difficulty with the findings of this study is that, given that the teaching sequence put in place was based on advice from a range of sources (including NW SEN Partnership (2004), Wire (2005) and Essex County Council (2013)), it is challenging to know which of the strategies could have caused the clear increase in attainment and engagement. However, whilst being privy to the limitations, we are able to conclude that for this specific set of learners, the strategies implemented had an overall positive impact.

Conclusion

Given the minimal previous research in this area, there is undoubtable room for future study, some of which has been suggested throughout. Perhaps most vitally, it would be useful to analyse which strategies for ASD have particular impact on learning. Wire concluded that ‘teachers need to have some knowledge of what the issues are surrounding autism in order to help these pupils’ 2005:128). However, I would go further and suggest that, in coming years, it will be necessary to provide a set of guidelines for teaching learners with ASD in MFL, in order to make the most of their huge potential to succeed. Of course, all children are different and one cannot draw blanket conclusions, but there are clear strategies which may be applicable to the majority of learners with ASD.

An alternative sphere of research would be to analyse the use of MFL learning in the development of children with ASD. Barber’s 1996) research touched upon the use of MFL learning for developing social and communication skills. However, there may be further scope for using MFL learning to improve L1 use and social interaction skills. MFL classes provide the opportunity to

show learners exactly how to interact, turn-take and build up conversations, skills which can be transferred to one's L1 interaction.

Humphrey and Lewis (2008, p.31) insisted that a 'paradigm shift' is needed: from the perception of ASD as a 'disorder', to the view of a 'triad of opportunity,' as shown by Pittman (2007). This has been an undertone of this research project, which has illustrated that strategies traditionally assumed to be for students with 'disabilities', can actually be beneficial for 'neurotypical' learners. Moreover, the data suggests that McGregor and Campbell's (2001) claim that mainstream school is not suitable for autistic learning needs can be contradicted. Moving forward, this may be a vital consideration for trainee teachers and it will play a part in my development as an NQT next year. It will be crucial to see the increasing rate of inclusion as an opportunity, as opposed to a hindrance to teaching. Regarding learners with ASD, teachers must consider the strengths of these pupils, as they may have huge potential for success in MFL, and that MFL, for some, may even provide a key opportunity for progression in their social communication and interaction.

References

- Asperger, H. (1944). Die 'Autistischen Psychopathen' im Kindesalter (Autistic Psychopathy in Childhood). *Archiv fur Psychiatrie und Nervenkrankheiten*, 117, 76-136
- Barber, C. (1996). The integration of a very able pupil with Asperger Syndrome into a mainstream school. *British Journal of Special Education*, 23, 1 19-24
- British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011). *Ethical guidelines for educational research*. London: British Educational Research Association.
- Cohen, L. & Manion, L. (1994), *Research Methods in education (4th Ed.)*. London: Routledge
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2013). *Research Methods in Education (7th Ed.)*. London: Routledge
- Connor, M. (1999). Children on the autistic spectrum: Guidelines for mainstream practice. *Support for Learning*, 14 (2), 80-86
- Convery, A. & Coyle, D. (1999). Differentiation and individual learners: A guide for classroom practices. *Pathfinder series (no 37)*: CILT

- Deacy, E. Jennings, F. & O'Halloran, A. (2015). Transition of students with autistic spectrum disorders from primary to post-primary school: a framework for success. *Support for learning*, 30 (4), 292-304
- Denscombe, M. (2014). *The Good Research Guide for small-scale research projects* (5th ed.). Maidenhead: Open University Press
- Department for Education (2014) The National Curriculum in England: Languages Programmes of Study Key Stage 3, available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239083/SECONDARY_national_curriculum_-_Languages.pdf
- Department for Education (2015). Special Educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years, retrieved February 10 2016 from
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf
- Essex County Council (2013). *Guidance to support Key Stage 3 & 4 young people with social communication needs*. (Hard-copy only)
- Frederickson, N. & Cline, A. (2009). *Special educational needs, inclusion and diversity*. New York: Open University Press.
- Goodall, C. (2015). How do we create ASD-friendly schools? A dilemma of placement. *Support for Learning*, 30 (4), 305-326
- Gregory, G. and Chapman, C. (2011). Creating a Climate for Learning. In G. Gregory (Ed.) *Differentiated Instruction: One size doesn't fit all*, (pp.1-12), California: Corwin
- Happé, F. & Frith, U. (2006), The weak coherence account: Detail-focused cognitive style in autistic spectrum disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 36 (1), 5-25.
- Her Majesty's Stationery Office. (2001) *Special Needs and Disability Act 2001*, Chapter 10. Retrieved March 10 2016 from
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2001/10/pdfs/ukpga_20010010_en.pdf
- Holmes, B. (1991). Communication re-activated: Teaching pupils with learning difficulties (*Pathfinder 6*), London: CILT

Johnson, E.

- Holmes, B. (1994). Differentiation in the FL classroom. In A. Swarbrick (Eds.) *Teaching Modern Languages* (pp.60-80), London: Routledge
- Humphrey, N. & Lewis, S. (2008). 'Make me normal' The views and experiences of pupils on the autistic spectrum in mainstream secondary schools. *Autism*, 12(1), 23-43
- Humphrey, N. & Symes, W. (2011). Peer interaction patterns among adolescents with autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs) in mainstream school settings. *Autism*, 15(4), 397-419
- Jordan, R. & Powell, S. (1995). *Understanding and Teaching Children with Autism*, England: Wiley & Sons.
- Kanner, L. (1943). Autistic Disturbances of Affective Contact. *Nervous Child*, 2, 217-50
- Kim, J.A., Szatmari, P., Bryson, S.E., Streiner, D.L. and Wilson, F.J. (2000). The prevalence of anxiety and mood problems among children with autism and Asperger syndrome. *Autism*, 4(2), 117-132.
- Lightbown, P. & Spada, N. (1999). *How Languages are Learned*, Oxford: OUP
- Lynch, S. & Irvine, A (2009). Inclusive education and best practice for children with autism spectrum disorder: an integrated approach. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 13(8), 845-859
- McGregor, E & Campbell, E. (2001). The attitudes of teachers in Scotland to the integration of children with autism into mainstream schools. *Autism*, 5(2) 189-207
- McPartland, JD. & Law, K. (2015). Autistic Spectrum Disorder in H. Friedman (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Mental Health* (pp.124-130). Oxford: Elsevier.
- Mitchell, I. (1994). Getting Pupils Talking. In A. Swarbrick (Ed.) *Teaching Modern Languages* (pp.107-115), London: Routledge
- North West Regional SEN Partnership (2004), Children with autism: strategies for accessing the curriculum (MFL), Department for education and skills.
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218194057/http://teachernet.gov.uk/_do_c/6701/modern%20foreign%20languages.pdf
- O'Brien, T. & Guiney, D. (2001). *Differentiation in Teaching and Learning*. London: Continuum

- Ochs, E., Kremer-Sadlik, T., Solomon, O. & Gainer Sirota, K. (2001). Inclusion as Social Practice: Views on Children with Autism. *Social Development*, 10(3), 399-419
- Ousley, O & Cermak, T, (2013) Autism Spectrum Disorder: defining dimensions and subgroups. *Current Developmental Disorders Reports*, 1(1), 20-28
- Perfitt, R. (2013). Practical considerations when supporting transitions for pupils with speech, language and communication needs. *British Journal for Special Education*, 40(4) 189-196
- Pittman, M. (2007). *Helping pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder to Learn*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing
- Somekh, B., & Noffke, S. (2009). Conclusions. In S. Noffke, B. Somekh. (Eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Educational Action Research*. (pp. 521-527). London: SAGE
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-ability Classrooms*. Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Tuchman Glass, K. (2011). Differentiated Instruction and Strategies in G. Gregory (Ed.) *Differentiated Instruction: One size doesn't fit all* (pp.87-110), California: Corwin
- Vygotskiĭ, L. S. & Cole, M. (1978). *Mind in society: the development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press
- Wing, L. (1996). *The Autistic Spectrum*. London: Constable
- Wire, V. (2005). Autistic Spectrum Disorder and learning foreign languages. *Support for Learning*, 20(3), 123-128

Appendix I: Unit 4 Medium-term plan

Lesson number	CLOs	LLOs	Activity ideas (with ASD intervention)
1 Le temps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Test feedback - Recognise the weather in French 	<p>Le temps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Il neige - Il fait froid/chaud - Il fait beau/mauvais - Il y a du vent - Il pleut - Il y a des orages/nuages - Il y a du soleil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Symbols to intro vocab - Dominoes - Pair speaking with symbols - Le morpion
2 La météo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describe the weather and activities you can do. - Listen to the weather forecast 	<p>Quand...</p> <p>Le temps</p> <p>Le compas</p>	<p>Dominoes</p> <p>Météo with symbols, in pairs</p> <p>Compass - visuals</p>
3 Ou habites-tu?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognise vocabulary for 'where do you live'? - Respond to the question 'ou habites-tu?' - Add details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dans une grande/petite ville - Dans un village - Dans une banlieue - A la montagne - A la campagne - Au bord de la mer 	<p>Recap of weather (symbols)</p> <p>Whiteboards – vocab for ou habites-tu</p> <p>Writing – visuals from weather, ou habites-tu, and j'aime etc.</p>

<p>4 Ma maison (computer room)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be able to write a description about your house 	<p>-j'habite dans...</p> <p>Une maison individuelle/jumelle</p> <p>Dans une ferme</p> <p>Dans un bungalow</p> <p>Dans un appartement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unscrambling of phrases - Pair work for vocab revision - Types of houses (visuals) - Pupils to creat a 'bubble' on computer next to image of their house.
<p>5 Les pieces dans ma maison</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To recognise rooms in the house - Say what there is and isn't in your house - Extend your sentences with connectives 	<p>Les pieces dans la maison</p> <p>Il y a/il n'y pas de...</p> <p>Eg : un salon, une cuisine, une chambre, une salle de bains...</p> <p>(Clic list)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vocab test - Visuals for rooms of the house - Beat the teacher - Speaking activity in pairs
<p>6 Dans ma chambre 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognise words to use to speak about your bedroom - Say what there is and isn't in your room - Add colours to your description 	<p>Un lit, une chaise, une armoire, une table, une lampe, un bureau.....</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Codebreaker activity to introduce vocabulary - Listening activity - Speaking in pairs - Drawing and labelling own bedrooms

7 Dans ma chambre 2 (computer room)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Revise and practise vocabulary relating to the topic so far using linguascope	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Linguascope – maison, chambre, meteo, ou j’habite	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Introduce levels of the house before computers (note down)- Everyone needs 5 new words noted down by the end- Revision worksheet for holidays
8 Revision	Revising all topic vocab	La maison de mes reves serait....	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Tetris translation- Revision worksheet recap

Appendix II: Lesson Observation

Lesson observation: 02/03/16 Tutor: (x)

Duration: 1 hour Time 14:15- 15:15

Class: 7X/Fr2 period4 in E12 Students: 19

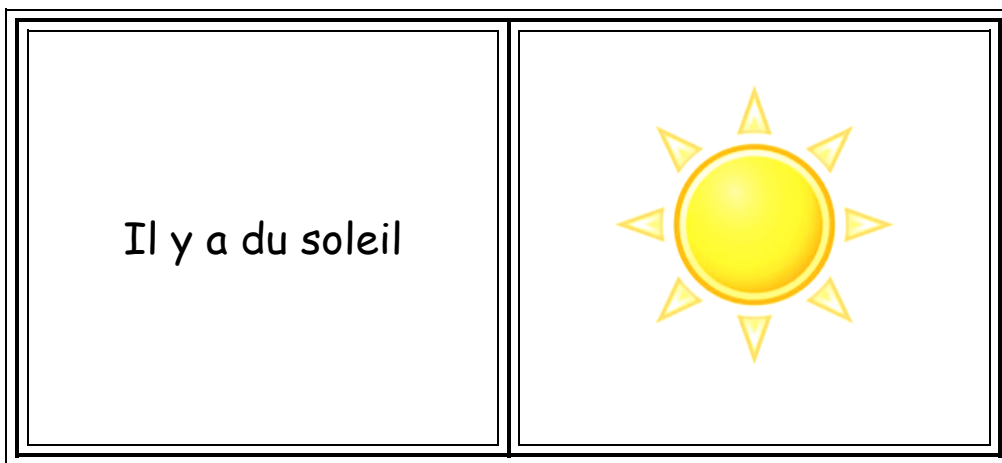
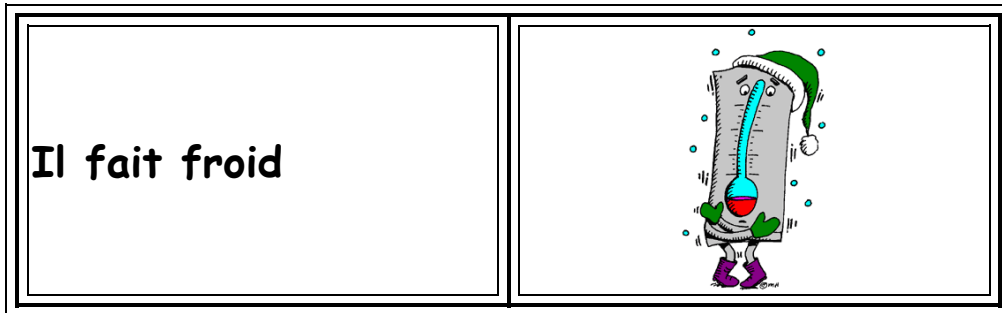
Initial behaviour expectations were conveyed to the class. Test papers that were previously completed by the class members were given out. Some students attempted to take advantage of the trainee teacher, however the attempts to misbehave or to disruptive the continuity of the lesson by any of the students were brought under control when required with a simple 3-1 count down. The required expectation was clear, the tutor invest in 1-2-1 conversations and support to the students whom may have been a little less confident with this subject.

The tutor took the time to check upon the progression of each group/table and reaffirmed the expectation where and when needed.

Good overall class management, pupil participation was observed and forthcoming as the students fully engaged with all the elements being conveyed by the tutor and throughout the class activities.

One of the activities ‘compass directions’ was undertaken by the students with the request for the class to complete the activity in silence. The students worked in silence and as the task progressed into an open Q/A forum, class management was maintained throughout as students raised their hand before attempting to answer the questions posed by the tutor. Praise was regularly conveyed to the student when the students answered correctly and the expectation for the homework assignment was clearly conveyed and explained to the class.

Appendix III: Weather symbols

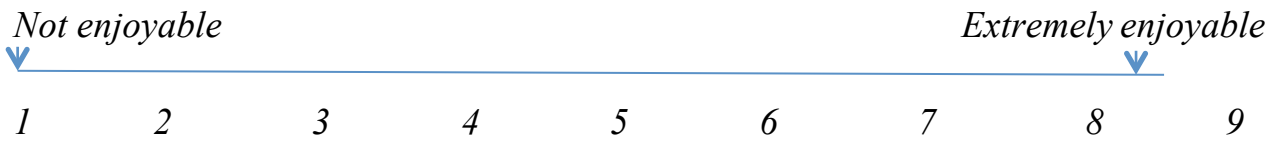


Appendix IV: Questionnaire 1

Questionnaire



Do you enjoy these activities in French lessons? Give them a rating out of 9.



Speaking games

Writing

Reading activities

Listening activities

Pair work

Group work

Role plays

What do you think about pair work? Do you enjoy it?

How much do you enjoy speaking activities in class?

What types of activity do you find the most difficult in French?

Appendix V: Questionnaire 2

7x French Questionnaire

Rate the following activities on how enjoyable you find them in French lessons. (Circle the number)

Not enjoyable Extremely enjoyable

↓ ↓

Speaking games	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Writing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Reading activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Listening activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Pair work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Group work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Role plays	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

What type of activity do you find most difficult?

How do you find speaking activities in pairs? Do you enjoy them?

Appendix VI : Group Interview

7x Group Interview – 1c

- What is your favourite activity we have done in French recently?
- Did you prefer the topic of school or the one about where you live? (Unit 3 or 4?) Why?
- How has the pair work been for you?
- What ways of learning in lessons have been most useful for you?
- We have done more speaking and communication activities recently – how have you found them?

Appendix VII: Class teacher observation notes

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE FACULTY OF EDUCATION
PGCE - PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENT SUPERVISION DOCUMENT

1. Current Targets:	
2. Standards Focus:	

Lesson Report

Trainee: [redacted] Subject: French Class: 7x Date: _____

Tekis - [redacted] was super engaged and worked well with his partner [redacted]. [redacted] needed prompting to participate with the rest of his group - he largely did it alone but the other asked him a direct Q.

Review
[redacted] appeared to be rather engaged (he was rocking a bit - he often does this when concentration on the board). [redacted] was focused but passive.

Mark review [redacted] seemed to enjoy checking his work. (lots of ticks!) [redacted] appeared rather passive at the start but soon "got into" the marking.

Go Around all verb song -> [redacted] loved it, massive smile, dancing + joining in. [redacted] was hesitant at the start but then started to smile when he could see it was in fact quite fun.

Stem base [redacted] was a little slow to start but had a really good go. [redacted] was very methodical in his approach.

Weather speaking
both boys did well in [redacted] but Max did not speak when asked a 3 WHQ (Why, How, What)

Signed: [Signature]
Copies to: Trainee, Subject Mentor/Professional Tutor, Link/Subject Lecturer


Appendix VIII: Pupil A writing assessments

Y7 Speaking Exam – Unit 3

Level: _____

Y7 Writing Exam – Unit 3

• Try to write at least 50 words about school. You should include:




J'aime les sciences et la géométrie
Parce que c'est plus amusant

Can you use your notes to
add a couple of sentences
please?

dans mon sac j'ai deux livres, une gomme, une calculatrice
un stylo et des cahiers de cours.

Y7 Writing Exam – Unit 4

Write 70 words about house and your room. You should include:



Remember to write in paragraphs and use connectives, opinions and negatives for a Level 4. Use lots of adjectives and a variety of language. If you can use another tense you will reach Level 5

J'ai écrit à propos de la chambre et de la maison.
Il y a un lit, une lampe, un tapis, des rideaux
et une armoire. will done!

What rooms are there in your house?
? Dans ma maison il y a _____, _____,

Assessment: Challenge Checkpoint

Subject: French Minimum Expectation: _____

Subject specific points of assessment: French Unit 4 Assessment
Write about where you live including:
What the weather is like ✓
What your house is like ✓
What your bedroom is like ✓
What your dream house would be like.

How have you met the challenge?
lovely couple of sentences,
very accurate. 2a

What can you improve upon next time?
Try to make sure
you answer all the
questions

What have I learnt from this assessment?

Appendix IX: Pupil A Homework

Les Devoirs For Wednesday

Stick this in your book please

Using the following template, write about your region and the weather there.....

Ma région, c'est le
C'est dans le nord/sud/est/ouest... De l'Angleterre.

Challenge: Can you include any of the following?

En été - in summer
En hiver - in winter
En printemps - in spring
En automne - in autumn

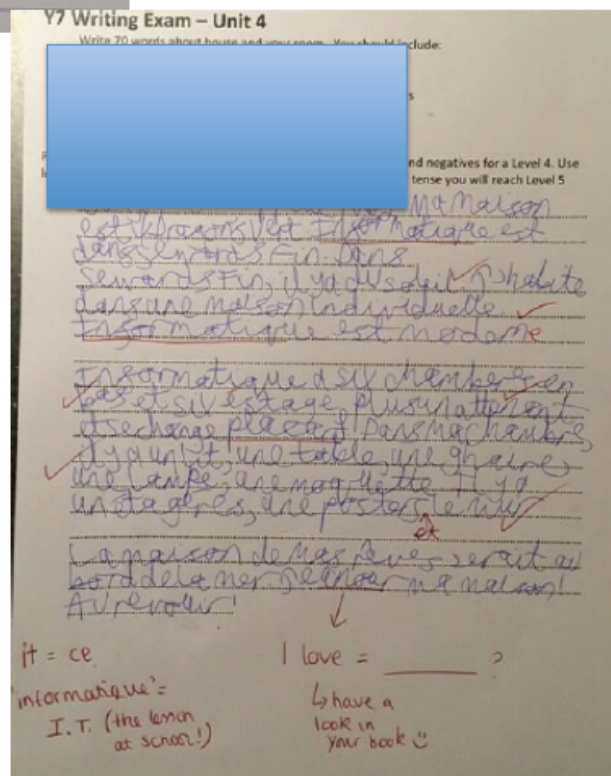
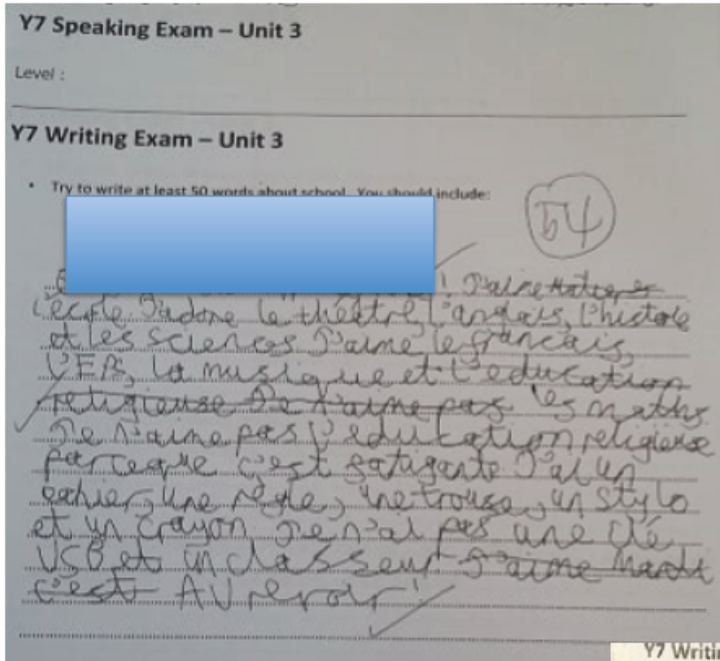
Quelquefois - sometimes
Souvent - often
Aussi - also
Mais - but

Ma région c'est wimbish c'est dans le est de l'Angleterre. En hiver souvent il ya du vent, aussi il est nuageux et très froid.

✓

Praise x2

Appendix X: Pupil B Writing Assessments



Appendix XI: Questionnaire Results

	Before	After	Change
Speaking Games	6.36	6.72	0.36
Writing	5	4.22	-0.78
Reading Activities	4.63	4.38	-0.25
Listening Activities	5.42	4.55	-0.87
Pair Work	6.68	7.38	0.7
Group Work	6.15	7.11	0.96
Role plays	5.63	6.72	1.09

Appendix XII: Assessment Results

Pupil	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	U2-3	U3-4
	2a	3c	3a	1	2
	2a	2a	3c	0	1
	3c	3b	4c	1	2
	2c	2b	3c	1	2
	2a	2a	3b	0	2
	2a	2a	3a	0	3
	3c	3c	4c	0	3
	2b	2a	3a	1	3
	2a	3c	3b	1	1
	3c	3b	4c	1	2
	2a	3b	4c	2	2
	2c	2b	3a	1	4
	3c	3b	4c	1	2
	2a	2a	3a	0	1
	2b	3c	3a	2	2
	3c	3c	3a	0	2
	2a	3c	4c	1	3
	2b	2c	3c	-1	3
	2a	3c	3b	1	1
	2a	3c	3a	1	2
	2b	3c	4c	2	3
	2a	3a	4b	3	2
Pupil A	2b	2c	3c	-1	3
Pupil B	2c	2b	3a	1	4