

**Building confidence,
consistency and
communication in a
Primary School setting**



Setting: Mainstream primary school

Role interviewed: Higher Level Teaching Assistant

Programme: Primary Education Programme (PEP)

The starting point

When Rachelle, a teaching assistant in a mainstream primary school, first began supporting a pupil with Down syndrome, she looked for guidance to ensure the school could fully meet the pupil's needs. The school tried various online training options, but each one left the team with more questions than answers. The team needed practical strategies and ongoing support, rather than just one-off information.

Why DSUK's Primary Education Programme?

Rachelle came across the Primary Education Programme through DSUK's Facebook group for education professionals and attended a free webinar to find out more.

The school could not find any comparable training or support locally, and the combination of evidence-based content, real-life examples, and ongoing support made DSUK's Primary Education Programme really stand out. The pupil's parents also recommended DSUK as a trusted source and encouraged the school to join the programme.



I was blown away. I really hammered back to school that we need this.

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Putting PEP into practice

Using the information and the CPD-accredited training

Staff across the school accessed the online library of training videos, ensuring everyone interacting with the pupil understood her profile, needs and the approaches that best supported her.

The programme offered clear planning guidance, adapted lesson examples, and strategies that can easily be implemented in a mainstream setting.

Accessing regular support sessions

When the team faced a persistent behaviour challenge, Rachelle brought it to one of the regular live support sessions. The advice and guidance she received from Dr Becky Baxter, who leads the programme, had an immediate impact:

“Becky gave us some other strategies to put in place. The child learned a new, positive way to gain attention which she now uses confidently with adults and peers.”



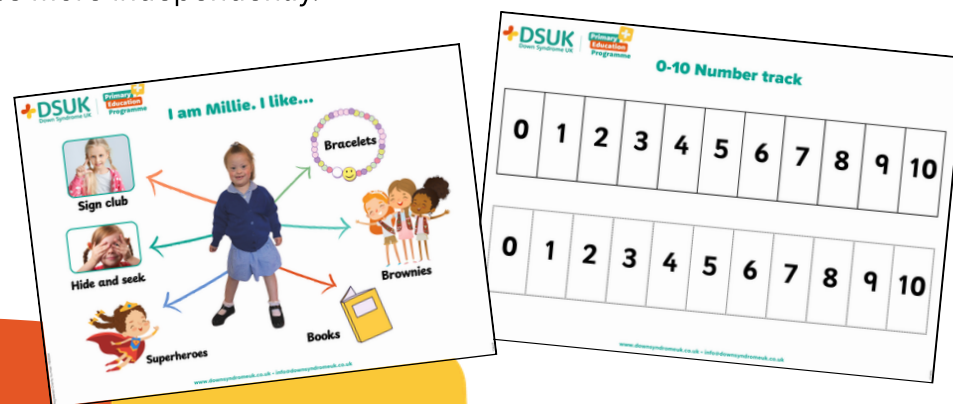
We were set on our way straight away from the beginning. We knew what we were doing.

Using downloadable resources

The team has made full use of the classroom-ready resources, in particular the:

- Large number line which matches the pupil’s visual needs.
- Days of the week caterpillar, which supported the pupil’s learning and resulted in her earning a Headteacher’s Award.
- “I am interested in...” boards which transformed lunchtime interactions and boosted the pupil’s independence and confidence interacting with her peers.

These tools have helped the pupil to communicate, participate and build friendships more independently.



What was the impact?

The programme has boosted the team's confidence and aided the pupil's progress:

- Greater independence: the pupil now initiates play, communicates her needs, and engages socially without relying on a staff member to help.
- Improved behaviour: simple changes in how the staff communicated with the pupil made expectations clearer and behaviour more predictable.
- Stronger staff knowledge: the whole team now shares a common understanding of how to support the pupil effectively, ensuring consistency.
- Effective planning: the curriculum guidance helped the team adapt lessons confidently and purposefully.
- Smoother transitions: the team is already using the transition materials to prepare next year's staff.



The progress she's made this year is fantastic, and that is because of what we've put in place from this programme: the fact that adults now know what her needs are and where to find the resources and training to meet those needs.



If you would like to discover more about
our Primary Education Programme,
please contact:

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or visit our website



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