

## **Evie's Story**

### **Background:**

Evie is 6 years old, like many children her age she's obsessed with her tablet. Her Mum locks it and Evie unlocks it, no one has taught her the password but somehow she knows it!! Near Evie's house is the local play park and she likes to go there every day. Evie is an active girl, she loves soft play, she loves her trampoline and her sand pit, at home she likes drawing and colouring. She loves her dogs. Evie goes to her local school, Brampton Primary School where she is in Year One.

The other thing to know about about Evie is that she has Down Syndrome.

### **Context:**

#### **What is Down Syndrome?**

Down Syndrome is caused by the presence of an extra chromosome in a baby's cells. In the majority of cases, Down Syndrome is not an inherited condition. Down Syndrome usually occurs because of a chance happening at the time of conception

#### **What are the characteristics of Down Syndrome?**

The most common features associated with Down syndrome include:

- Low muscle tone (babies appear "floppy")
- Flat facial features, with a small nose
- Upward slant to the eyes
- Small skin folds on the inner corner of the eyes
- Small, abnormally shaped ears
- Single deep crease across the centre of the palm
- Hyper-flexibility (excessive ability to extend joints)
- Fifth finger has only one flexion furrow instead of two
- Extra space between the big toe and the second toe
- Enlarged tongue that tends to stick out

## Down Syndrome in the UK

- Two babies with Down Syndrome are born every day in the UK. Around one in every 1,000 babies born will have Down Syndrome.
- There are 60,000 people in the UK with the condition.
- Although the individual chance of a baby having Down Syndrome is higher for older mothers, more babies with Down Syndrome are born to younger women, reflecting the higher birth rate in this group.
- Down Syndrome is not a disease. People with Down Syndrome are not ill and do not “suffer” from the condition.
- All people with the Syndrome will have a varying degree of learning difficulty. However, the majority of people with Down Syndrome will walk and talk and many will read and write, go to ordinary schools and lead fulfilling, semi-independent lives
- Today, with the right support, people with Down Syndrome can enjoy a life of sixty years plus.

## Resources:

Evie’s Case Study Teacher Version and Student Version

Evie’s Case Study PowerPoint

## Description of Good Practices

### Ethos

Evie attends Brampton Primary School. The school is fully inclusive. On the school website the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy states that:

*Brampton Primary School respects the fact that children:*

- *have different educational and behavioural needs and aspirations*
- *require different strategies for learning*
- *learn at different rates*
- *require a range of different teaching strategies and experiences*

*Teachers respond to children’s needs by:*

- *providing support in all curriculum needs*
- *planning to develop children’s understanding through the use of all the senses and experiences*
- *planning for children’s full participation in learning, and in physical and practical activities*
- *planning for children to manage their behaviour, enabling them to participate effectively and safely in learning*

*This policy ensures that teaching arrangements are fully inclusive. This may require withdrawal of individuals or small groups to enable them to access skills to enhance learning opportunities. The majority of children will have their needs met through normal classroom arrangements and appropriate differentiation.*

*At Brampton Primary School the objectives for children with SEND must be the same for all pupils; that is to give each individual pupil the opportunity to maximise their potential in all areas of school life. ‘At the heart of the work of every primary school class is a continuous cycle of planning, teaching and assessing (‘assess, plan, do, review’) which takes account of the wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of children.’ The majority of children will learn and make progress with these arrangements. Those children who have needs*

*that are identified as needing action that is additional or different from that which goes on in the classroom as part of our differentiated approach will be identified as having special educational needs & disabilities.*

Evie is a child with an identified special educational needs & disabilities (SEND), however her needs are met within the Primary School in the town where she lives.

Evie also attends the Education Centre for Children with Down Syndrome (ECCDS) at Hexham Children's Centre. ECCD is a charitable organisation dedicated to the education and development of children with Down syndrome. They constantly evaluate their work and research data in conjunction with recognised statutory bodies, to provide the most current learning experiences for the children. At the ECCDS the ethos is one of positivity and celebration. The centre is committed to helping children and their parents acquire essential skills that will equip them to meet the future with confidence.

### **Collaboration**

Evie has an Education Health and Care Plan. Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs. The EHC plan identified that Evie requires extra support while at school to enable her to meet her potential. The process of assessing Evie's needs and preparing her EHC Plan fully involved her parents. Evie's EHC Plan provides 16 hours of one-to-one support for Evie each week. Mrs Foster is Evie's one-to-one support; she works closely with Evie's class Teacher Mrs Harrison, and helps Evie in the classroom with the work that Mrs Harrison plan for her. Sometimes she helps Evie when she is working in the classroom; she also works with Evie in a special room either on her own or with a small group of children from her class. Mrs Harrison and Mrs Foster work very closely to plan for Evie's needs.

Mrs Foster is involved in another collaboration that is quite unusual, every Thursday morning Evie, her Mum and Mrs Foster travel 44 km to the town of Hexham where they attend a special group together based at the Children's Centre. The group is run by an organisation called 'The Education Centre for Children with Down Syndrome' (ECCDS). This is a unique collaboration. At the group Evie takes part in activities planned by professionals who are experts in addressing the needs of children with Down Syndrome, while Evie takes part in the activities Mum and Mrs Foster observe how the staff interact with Evie and how they approach the activities, this means that when Evie is at school and when she is at home everyone is following the same techniques to support her learning and development. This is really important because a collaborative approach ensures that Evie receives consistent support no matter where she is.

Staff from the 'The Education Centre for Children with Down Syndrome' (ECCDS) have also come to school to support the whole staff to be able to support Evie more effectively. ECCDS currently offer a variety of courses, conferences and workshops for all the courses the learning objectives are:

- To explore Down syndrome and the impact it has on children's learning and achievements
- To evaluate present practise and reflect on a range of practical strategies for classroom and whole school implementation

The school reflect on the support they have had from ECCDS

*Mrs Harrison (Teacher)                      Well I think for us, certainly for me, I have never taught a child with Downs Syndrome and the first thing we needed to do was educate ourselves in order to educate her. It was important for all of us.*

*Mrs Geary (Head Teacher )                All of us*

*Mrs Harrison (Teacher)                    Helen from ECCDS came to do an in-service training with staff, she was absolutely fantastic she really was great. She was so practical in what she said. You know it really did make sense and that was when Evie was in Reception. So that gave me the idea that I would really like Eve to be involved in that group even though it was in*

*Northumberland and not Cumbria. And I kind of thought it would be a really good idea for Louise to go because it was new for Mrs Foster too*

*Mrs Foster (1:1 Support)*

*No, no I'd never done one to one with a Downs Syndrome child either. The whole idea is quite nerve wracking because you're worried that you're not doing something correctly, emm is it the right route you're following?*

*Mrs Harrison (Teacher)*

*and actually Cumbria itself it does have some groups, and we're involved with them now but we didn't really know about them then*

*Mrs Foster (1:1 Support)*

*But this is an education centre though not just a group*

The ECCDS provide lots of specially made resources to support the children's learning. The school find that these are not just good for Evie, but for some of her peers too, and with an additional benefit for Evie.

*Mrs Harrison (Teacher)*

and Mrs Foster comes back and she with resources and ideas. And I've actually got at the minute I've actually got an SEN maths group, so that's my group and a lot of the children in there have, you know, specific needs, so actually to use those resources with the whole group has just been, well it's had a big impact

*Mrs Foster (1:1 Support)*

Yes, yes

*Mrs Harrison (Teacher)*

Just the ideas and the way that they do things ...hugely.....and connected to Downs Syndrome that is giving children with special needs some extra support, or a different way of doing and it's just helped us with those groups and we've seen, we've seen huge differences in lots of children not just Evie

*Mrs Geary (Head Teacher )*

Not just Evie

*Mrs Foster (1:1 Support)*

No, no

*Mrs Harrison (Teacher)*

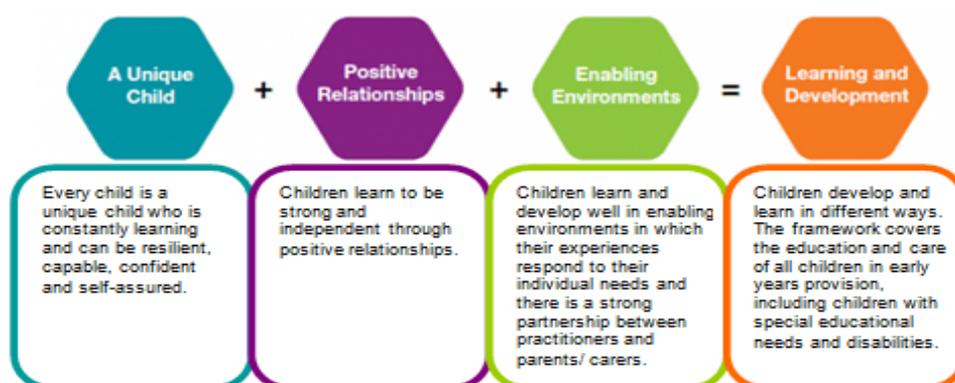
I think as well for Evie it is she's seeing us using those resources with others, it's not just her the whole group are using it and it makes her more confident she's like "I know that", yes like the Numicon

*Mrs Foster (1:1 Support)*

it was a little bit of a heads-up for her – once she's used those things before, she knows how to use it you know what I mean? Because she does say funny things like I was using some hand tapping which is to do with phonics and when I got it out yesterday she said "Ahhh Helen!" So she'd instantly got that.

## **Communication**

Effective communication, in the form of 'positive relationships,' is one of the key principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage:



In the UK developing positive relationships with parents and promoting parental involvement in their children's learning is really important. The school is committed to working closely with parents. The school's Special Needs Policy states,

### **Partnership with Parents**

- *Class teachers work closely with parents throughout their child's education.*
- *Parents should in the first instance contact the class teacher or SENDCo in case of any concern or difficulty.*
- *The school provides information about the Parent Partnership service to all parents of children with SEND on request. Our local Parent Partnership Coordinator is Gwen Hawley.*
- *At all stages of the SEND process the school keeps parents fully informed and involved. We take account of the wishes, feelings and knowledge of parents and encourage them to make an active contribution to their child's education.*

For this to be effective, a good relationship between the parents and the school is important. The school reflected on the impact that travelling to the ECCDS group in Hexham had on that relationship. Mrs Foster said "I think it has built up the relationship with myself and Mum because we sit in a car for half an hour there and back chatting away about what's happened that week, so there's a nice relationship going on there."

### Developing Communication Skills with Children with Down Syndrome

Communicating with spoken language is one of the challenges for children with Down Syndrome. Monica from ECCDS says the aim of the speech and language programmes is

- To help children develop understanding and production of words and sentences [signed, spoken or written] related to chosen people, things and events in the children's lives.
- To develop important skills that will support the children's learning.
- To support parents in developing expertise and skills to help their children.

#### Developing words

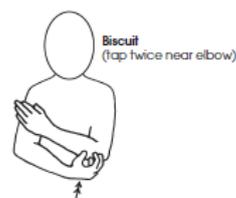
Helen from ECCDS says it is not easy for children with Down syndrome to get started on saying words. We know they can sign these more easily so that is where we start, with Makaton. As we sign we also say the word and the more the child feels the signing movements and hears the sound of the word, the better he or she will be able to store this word in his/her memory and therefore start using it. So we use words children will hear at home and that they will find interesting and useful, like favourite foods



Cake



Sweet  
(rotate finger slightly)



Biscuit  
(tap twice near elbow)

#### Developing sentences.

Our brains are very clever at knowing how to put words into the correct order to make sentences. They seem to know instinctively 'who' is doing 'what' and 'where'. We use this instinctive knowledge and build on it for our children using a programme called Narrative Therapy. The children are taught to answer the questions 'who?', 'what doing?' etc. with the correct response "My mummy", "carrying the bag" and so on with the help of colour coded written words and pictures.

#### Developing speech

Speech is very difficult for most children with Down syndrome. Saying the speech sounds and putting them together into words is a big hurdle. We help children step by step to overcome this hurdle by seeing where speech sounds are made in the mouth and learning how they feel when they say each sound. We also help them to listen to how these sounds appear in words and to say the words clearly enough so other children can understand them.

It is the hope that everyone who has contact with the child uses the signs so that signs are reinforced and the child feels empowered to communicate using the signs. Many children start to learn signs when they are

really young but for Evie this wasn't the case. Everyone sees her speech and language development as one of Evie's main areas for development

*Sharon (Evie's Mum)*

Her speech is a lot better but it needs to get better, she has got some really good friends at school it just about trying to help her keep up so that the gap doesn't get so big

*Mrs Harrison (Teacher)*

She's now she's talking to us a lot more and it's us kind of understanding what she's saying. That's difficult in terms of assessment you know we can't always understand her so it's quite difficult for us to assess exactly what she knows and she's trying to tell us. Because she is talking to us a lot now you can pick out words and phrases but it's getting quite frustrating for her because she's frustrated with you because she knows what she wants to

*Mrs Foster (1:1 Support)*

She just repeats and repeats and repeats. The child psychologist said yesterday that it would be helpful if she used Makaton

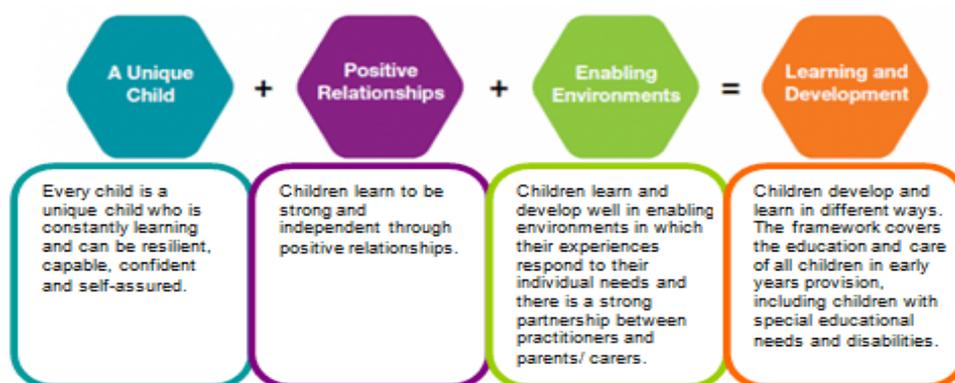
*Mrs Harrison (Teacher)*

We think she needs the Makaton to be able to use that to reinforce the language. We had some training so we could use a little bit, but if Evie doesn't know the sign then it doesn't really help.

Helen from ECCDS has worked with the staff and given them some support in using Makaton Signs. She has also been involved in a whole school activity which was part of the 'World Down Syndrome Day' celebrations. All of the children wore odd socks (remember we saw Evie wearing her odd socks?) and Helen taught all of the children to sing and sign the song 'I believe I can fly'.

### Holistic approach

Evie is 6 years old but at school Mrs. Harrison and Mrs. Foster plan for her learning using the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document 'Development Matters' (Early Education 2012). The EYFS is based on a holistic view of children, the principles underpinning the curriculum are:



It reflects the belief that if we want children to learn and develop their full potential we need to consider all of their needs especially their social and emotional needs, not just the educational ones.

At the ECCDS the ethos is one of positivity and celebration, they promote the view that children are individuals first with great potential and that Down Syndrome presents barriers for them to overcome, it does not define them. The centre is committed to helping children and their parents acquire essential skills that will equip them to meet the future with confidence.

At the ECCDS group Evie takes part in a number of activities which reflect this holistic approach;

- Welcome time
- Fine and gross motor activities
- Speech and language activities
- Snack time
- Mathematical activities
- Singing (just the children and staff)

We saw Evie taking part in many of these activities.

## Adaptations

The school make a number of adaptations.

- The first and most important one is that although Evie is 6 years old and her peers have their learning guided by the National Curriculum (DfE 2014) Evie's learning is still being mapped against the outcomes for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2013). She still takes part in the same activities as the rest of the class but her work is differentiated to meet her needs.
- Evie has an Individual Learning Plan which sets out her targets across the curriculum and the small steps that will help her achieve them. This helps her teacher to plan for her learning and development. The Educational Psychologist helps to develop this.
- Mrs Foster also goes to the ECCDS group with Evie and her Mum. The school uses Evie's Pupil Premium funding to enable this activity to happen.
- As part of her Individual Learning Plan Evie has been allocated 16 hours a week extra support while she is in school. Evie has the support of Mrs. Foster who works her in some of the following ways
  - One to one support in the classroom to help Evie while she works alongside her peers
  - One to one support in a special room away from the classroom so that she can help Evie with a specific skill
  - Small group work in a special room away from the classroom with peers who have similar educational needs as Evie. Often they use resources that Evie has been introduced to at the ECCDS Group.

The staff from school reflected on the impact this has had not only on Evie's academic progress but on her self esteem and confidence too.

<i>Mrs Harrison (Teacher)</i>	Louise comes back and she gets resources and ideas. I've actually got, at the minute, I've actually got an SEN maths group, so that's my group and a lot of the children in there have, you know, specific needs, not all of them but quite a high percentage of them really, there's a variety of statements. So actually to use those resources with the whole group has just been, well it's had a big impact
<i>Mrs Foster (1:1 Support)</i>	Yes, yes
<i>Mrs Harrison (Teacher)</i>	Just the ideas and the way that they do things ...hugely....and connected to Down Syndrome that is giving children with special needs some extra support, or a different way of doing and it's just helped us with those groups and we've seen, we've seen huge differences in lots of children not just Evie
<i>Mrs Geary (Head Teacher )</i>	Not just Evie
<i>Mrs Foster (1:1 Support)</i>	No no
<i>Mrs Harrison (Teacher)</i>	I think as well, for Evie, she's seeing us using those resources with others, it's not just her, the whole group are using it and it makes her more confident she's like "I know that", yes like the Numicon
<i>Mrs Foster (1:1 Support)</i>	It was a little bit of a heads-up for her – once she's used those things before, she knows how to use it you know what I mean? Because she does say funny things like I was using some hand tapping which is to do with phonics and when I got it out yesterday she said "Ahhh Helen!" So she'd instantly got that. Other sometimes it can

go the other way, remember those pegs Granny Annie gave her and we used them and she said, "Mine, Granny Annie!"

School also use a different reading approach with Evie, one that has been recommended by ECCDS, the school were really grateful for this advice because they didn't really know what to do next with Evie to take her learning forward.

*Mrs Harrison (Teacher)* literally we didn't really know where to go next because obviously we'd kind of hit a bit of a wall where she know her initial sounds but we didn't know what was the best kind of approach

*Mrs Foster (1:1 Support)* and I said to her they don't blend, they don't blend at Hexham, but our next step is always to blend, to build it up, so Helen's been fab, she's come out and shared with us a new programme. So that's what she's using with Evie as well as she is very much involved in our whole approach to literacy and she has her own personalised programme

*Mrs Harrison (Teacher)* it is the 'Reading in Language for Children with Downs Syndrome', so it's reading, we're just starting with the reading and there is also a language programme as well

Using this approach Evie has made really good progress in reading

*Sharon (Evie's Mum)* She had her first reading book the other week and she got an award in assembly for it. She just read another one but again it is the work from here at the ECCDS Group with the work from the school that helps a lot. It has made a massive difference.

## Outline Session Plan

Possible timings	<u>Learning</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Resources</u>  <b>Red – students</b> <b>Blue - Teachers</b>
Introduction 15 minutes	To establish or revisit a shared understanding of the 'keys' of inclusion	Look at the keys one at a time, begin with asking the students what they understand by the terms, then elaborate to establish a clear basic understanding.	Keys on individual laminated sheets
Introduction 30 minutes	To establish or revisit a shared understanding of Down Syndrome and to introduce Evie	Use the first three boxes on the Case Study Student Version to begin a discussion about children with Down Syndrome.  Share the PowerPoint, pause if needed to give sufficient time for the students to sustain listening. Support students to understand unfamiliar vocabulary.	<b>Case Study Student Version</b>  Case Study Teacher Version  PowerPoint: Evie's Story
20 minutes	To begin to consider the 'keys' within Evie's story	In small groups ask them to identify as many bits of evidence to support the keys as they can.  Students can choose how to do this – they may make notes on their student sheet or create a spider diagram or thought shower.	Keys on individual laminated sheets  Paper, pens, highlighters
10 minutes	Share the findings of each group and identify the strongest keys	Allocate each group a 'key' and ask students to feedback to the group, ask other groups to make additions if appropriate.  Use this sheet to ensure no important points are missed.	Case Study Teacher Version
5 - 10 minutes	Consider the theme of collaboration	Re-focus on the aspects of collaboration.  Compare the evidence of good practice in Evie's story with other case studies you have engaged with so far.  Can the students think of their own examples of collaborations?	
15 minutes	Consider the theme of holistic view	Use the planning sheet to identify all of the aspects of Evie's development that were supported by her activities at the Education Centre for Children with Down Syndrome.  Use 'PILES' to help you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical</li> <li>• Intellectual</li> <li>• Language and communication</li> <li>• Emotional</li> <li>• Social</li> </ul> Note the examples you have found	<b>Case Study Student Version</b>
20 minutes	Share and evaluate	Share one aspect at a time from each group.  Consider how some of these could be incorporated into your practice.	