General Strategies to Support Older Students with SLCN

Understanding of Spoken Language:

- Ensure the student is listening before you start speaking
- Slow down your speech rate and give the student extra time to process language
- Encourage the student to say when they have not understood
- Do not assume comprehension of instructions and vocabulary - check by asking the student to explain what you have told them
- Be aware of gaps in vocabulary and ensure that key vocabulary is understood
- Break down instructions into short, clear chunks
- Sequence information in a logical order. It is easier to understand when the order of the language you use reflects the order that tasks should be carried out in e.g. ‘first run around the pitch one time, then pick up a tennis ball’ not ‘before you pick up a tennis ball run around the pitch one time.’
- Avoid use of ambiguous language such as sarcasm, jokes or sayings that can be misinterpreted e.g. “You'll be the death of me”
- Give the student plenty of support with activities that involve verbal reasoning
- Use visual strategies to support understanding of spoken language
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**Expression of language:**

- Remember that we communicate to get a message across – try not to focus on how the student is communicating e.g. the grammar, pronunciation or stammer – concentrate on the meaning.
- Give the student extra time to respond.
- Accept a reduced amount of output e.g. a one word answer rather than a sentence or only having to give a presentation to a few peers rather than the whole class.
- If the student gets stuck on a particular word – encourage him to think of other related words e.g. to describe the target word.
- Try helping them to structure their language by asking specific questions e.g. “who was there? When did it happen? What happened first?”
- Use visual strategies to support expression and ensure that students can show their knowledge e.g. photo boards.

**Social skills:**

- Encourage the student to give you eye contact and take notice of the interactions between people happening in their environment.
- Do not let the student dominate interactions – reinforce the importance of turn-taking.
- Model appropriate conversational rules, responses etc. e.g. how to greet peers.
- Encourage interaction with peers but recognise the difficulties of group work. Engineer it so that the student with SLCN has a good role model as a partner in group activities.
- Help the student reflect on the dynamics of relationships and why there may be negative outcomes.
- Restrict time spent on any obsessive topics or interests e.g. can only talk on ‘special topic’ after completing work.
- Explain non-verbal communication and social rules that the student may find confusing.
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**Behaviour:**

- Provide a calm, predictable environment
- Place students with SLCN with positive peers who are good role models in terms of behaviour and learning
- Ensure work is differentiated to a level the student can access
- Have appropriate LSA support in lessons
- Be aware of stress triggers and put support strategies in place
- Ensure any differentiated behaviour strategies are in place consistently e.g. trackers, rewards, alternatives to moved room
- Allow the student to leave the room with the LSA before they lose control
- Use visual supports such as 5 point scales and social stories consistently
- Be aware that a student with SLCN may need time-out before they can have a conversation about an incident
- Have a supervised place to go during non-structured times
- Never respond to the student in a confrontational manner
- Check that the student has understood a situation and the language used when their response is not appropriate so misunderstandings can be cleared up immediately
- Be aware that students may not want to admit in front of their peers that they are finding language or a task confusing. If you have concerns speak to them individually
Learning:

- Provide a suitable environment and minimise distractions
- Provide curriculum pathways that are suitable for students with SLCN
- Differentiate work appropriately. This includes the spoken and written language of instruction and language of the curriculum.
- Students with specific SLCN are usually strong visual and kinaesthetic learners. Use visual strategies – pictures, diagrams, charts, mind maps/word webs etc.
- Consider the best ways to present written information so that students can process it by themselves e.g. chunk related information, bold key words and provide word definitions.
- Use writing frames and have templates ready for completion. Get the student involved in practical activities
- Use the students’ interests and experiences to help him understand - relate the curriculum to real life
- Make clear associations between new and old information
- Ensure homework is suitable and clearly recorded. Homework may take students with SLCN significantly longer
- Support students with organisation of work e.g. ensure that work is saved in an appropriately named file in the correct area on the students’ computer drive
- Ensure that there are clearly defined breaks in lessons and have a clear system for rewards/motivation
- Explicitly highlight potential dangers such as those in technology and science and when leaving the school for trips etc.