

Tips for parents – pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)

What is MLD?

- MLD is a generic term that is used to describe pupils who may need extra support with their learning. This will vary from pupil to pupil.

Generally, children with MLD will have some or all of:

- Difficulty understanding basic concepts.
- Problems acquiring basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy, resulting in a lack of confidence in using and developing the skills they do have.
- A lack of logic.
- Poor problem-solving skills.
- An inability to generalise learning and apply it to new situations.
- Limited communication skills, coupled with immature social and emotional understanding.
- Poor fine and gross motor skills.
- Difficulty with personal organisation.
- Poor auditory/visual memory.
- Poor long and short-term memory; difficulty remembering what has been taught.
- Speech and language delay.
- Social and behavioural difficulties.
- Sensory impairment.

As you can see from the list there are many areas that MLD can affect, and each child will have different learning strengths and needs.

Practical tips to help pupils who have MLD:

- Visual reminders for daily routines can be helpful. A visual timetable can be used to help them to get ready for school in the mornings, or to organise themselves the night before, so that you can leave on time in the morning.
- Keep a structured routine, with clear boundaries. Whilst this is important for all children, those with MLD, tend to thrive on routine.

- Try not to compare your child to other children the same age. Everyone progresses at a different rate and this is especially true for children with MLD. Instead, praise small progression steps and celebrate what they can do. Children with MLD are more likely to have low self-esteem, and comparing themselves to their peers will cause some of this.
- Focus on their strengths, not just weaknesses. What are they good at? What do they enjoy? If they can excel in one area, then this can be used to help them to gain confidence in areas they may struggle more with.
- Repetition is key to learning, whether this is at home or in school. Especially when it comes to revision time, it is important to keep going over the same topics and information until it is firmly embedded in their memory.
- If there are motor skills, co-ordination issues then there are lots of ways that you can help your child; from getting special cutlery, to devising an exercise routine with them. It may be that they need extra guidance from an occupational therapist or physiotherapist, in which case you will need to speak to your GP or Paediatrician and ask for a referral.

Where to find more help and guidance:

- Parent Advisory Team Thurrock <https://www.patt.org.uk/>
- NHS website - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/learning-disabilities/>
- Mencap - <https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/what-learning-disability>
- Thurrock local offer - <https://www.askthurrock.org.uk/kb5/thurrock/fis/localoffer.page>

You can also contact us at the school:

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