

## TRANSCRIPT: REACh: Keeping pupils engaged

Jen Angelini and Catherine Bernie

**Jen Angelini:** Within the REACh approach, we have someone who's in charge of the activity as a whole and it's their job to pick up pupils who are at a loose end, perhaps, and to try and involve them, but when you're working with a pupil one-to-one that's a time where you really shouldn't be, necessarily, focusing on the bigger picture but trying to engage that pupil as much as you can in a focused way.

We have pupils with differing needs. We've got a few pupils who are more verbal and who are higher cognitively as well, and we do try and structure it so that we can have like mini-groups within the classroom, working on slightly different activities to suit their needs and also their interests as well.

The staff in the classroom do know the pupil targets and so if they're having difficulty with engaging a pupil it's going back to the target and saying, 'OK, what are their sensory-motor activities that they most enjoy?' and make sure you're trying to use the target, but go back to what they enjoy the most. For instance, with Mark with the role play and the puppets, he didn't want to use the puppets with the food that we had out but I know he loves the chase games and so it's trying to then go back to that activity and then build from there so that you're moving closer to your own target with the pupil.

**Catherine Bernie:** If you've got a good relationship you can persist. So Roisin I know fairly well, so I could keep going back and going, 'Come on, give it another go', and she didn't get aggressive. So, a member of staff would persist for a while with a child but then if they were continually pushing them away or not engaged, the member of staff would need to think again because we find if a child won't engage, we've got the wrong activity or we're trying to engage them in the wrong way, so we need to go back and reassess what would be a preferable activity to offer and, usually, it means going back a step to more sensory-motor activities, but that group engagement is the main aim because they are often peripheral learners, and we want to be able to move away from that and get them back into the wanting to engage and then beginning to learn.