

TRANSCRIPT: Supporting pupils' hearing in school

Graham Groves

We have two members of staff who work within the school from the Sensory Inclusion Service. We have Janet, who is the 'teacher of the deaf', who works here on an on-going basis supporting the children who wear hearing aids. My role is an education audiologist and we have the responsibility for fitting and evaluating the hearing aid systems that the children wear within the school. I come in on a twice-a-term basis, where we will work with the children and with the members of staff to evaluate whether the hearing aids that we fitted are meeting the children's needs. And Janet's role would be to feed back from any assessments that I'm doing, what our observations have been and how to manage the hearing aids on an on-going basis and part of Janet's role, as well, is keeping in touch with the families and making sure they are aware of what intervention and what strategies we're advising.

Part of our role is supporting the staff in terms of learning about hearing loss and what it means to have a hearing loss. Hearing impairment is a disability that has a wide range of levels and configurations and it's important that staff have a view of the nature of hearing loss for each individual child that we support and then, beyond that, is looking at what the implications of that hearing loss are for the child's inclusion and access to the curriculum in school. And part of that work is to look at how we would hope a hearing aid would help the children in school - what are the limitations of hearing aids and also what the influence of the acoustic environment is for children when they're wearing hearing aids.

Part of the work we would do with members of staff within a school and also with families, will be giving them an idea of what it's like to have a hearing loss. So we would do lots of simulation activities so that they can experience what it's like with a hearing loss and, often, when staff have got that empathy, then they can begin to understand about what it's like to listen with a hearing loss within a classroom.