Quality first teaching – how might teachers be supporting my child’s SEN needs?

Teaching is a complex activity, as not only does a teacher have to have excellent subject knowledge, they also need to be able to manage the needs and behaviour of thirty children at a time. This is so all members of the class can work in a calm and safe environment. A regular teacher will have access to information about your child’s specific SEN but as many children have SENd but do not meet the threshold for an ECHP teachers are used to supporting their needs within a classroom. Here are some of the adjustments and routines used to support learners with SENd. You will notice that the ambition for SENd learners is the same as is the expectation of their behaviour and interactions with staff and students.

* Lessons in subjects are well planned with clear learning outcomes.
* High expectations by teachers of learner engagement in the lesson.
* Seating plans are carefully considered by staff with children seated to enable the teacher to monitor and support them.
* Opportunities are in place for learners to succeed as well as being challenged, clear behaviour curriculum and expectations shared with leaners the ‘why’ as well as the how in behaviour
* Opportunities for interactions for all learners, questioning is pitched appropriately by staff who knew the students’ capabilities and full responses encouraged – cold calling
* An emphasis on learning through dialogue, teacher explanations have been well thought out to help students get a clear understanding of what is being taught- misconceptions are tested out through questioning which may be reframed to assist understanding.
* Clear, structured lessons enable classwork to be varied including independent, pair and group work to support with developing independence. Structured routines taught for example turn and talk to support learners get the most from these opportunities and encourage equal participation.
* Knowledge and understanding are not assumed. Clarity regarding tasks and learning objectives need to be shared with the learner. Examples and models of what success looks like supports learners accessing tasks.
* Links to prior learning: start the lesson with revision, this could be through quizzing, questioning or similar as teachers refer to previous work on the same topic.
* Developing the use of mini white boards with students so they can show their understanding and the teacher can easily see who has not fully understood and can follow up.
* Regular revision and repetition: Think of it as a spiral of learning where you keep returning to a topic, with increasingly long periods in between each return; this is sometimes called spaced practice
* Break up learning tasks: build in movement from one task to another where possible, change pace, change activity, use breaks; new learning needs time to ‘bed in’ and breaks can help that process
* An expectation learners take responsibility for their own learning and equipment
* Regular use of praise to engage and motivate learners intrinsic and extrinsic motivation acknowledged.
* Keywords visible and explained in context to aid understanding.
* The use of Literacy Mats, Dictionaries and Thesauri encouraged
* A range of resources and strategies evident in planning and delivery-visual aids, concrete and visual resources, hands-on and experiential opportunities, use of symbols and visuals to support understanding.
* Knowledge organisers shared with students which ‘chunk’ the main knowledge they need to know
* note taking and study skills are specifically taught to enable learners to develop independence skills
* Use memory aids: for example, visual stimuli, mnemonics songs and rhymes, whatever works.
* Reading unpacked texts opportunities for solo, teacher led or choral response to support understanding of the text.
* Use of reading rulers to assist students in tracking the text