**EA Sensory Service**  

# Acoustic Accessibility – 10 important things you should know

Acoustic accessibility is achieved when what is spoken is received by the listener at a volume that allows the words to be clearly heard and potentially understood.

1. When a teacher talks to a class of pupils, all but those with the most profound deafness will hear a voice but will not necessarily hear each word clearly enough to be able to know and understand what has been said.
2. Poor classroom acoustic design, noise from both inside and outside the classroom, excessive reverberation, size and shape of the room can all be barriers to achieving acoustic accessibility.
3. Pupils with less than average hearing will struggle more to hear clearly what is being said in a classroom with poor acoustic accessibility.
4. The quality of hearing of pupils with moderate hearing loss often goes undetected in classrooms, leaving them struggling to understand what is being said. They rarely complain.
5. All pupils sitting further from the teacher than the teacher’s voice will normally carry, its ‘critical distance’, will miss words that are spoken.
6. Pupils are not able to consistently ‘fill in the gaps’ of what is being said to them if they miss words, until they are approximately 15 years of age due to their cognitive immaturity and limited vocabulary.
7. Pupils with hearing loss regularly underperform academically when compared to their classroom colleagues and require excellent acoustic accessibility if they are to succeed at or above the same rate as their peers.
8. Significant improvements in acoustic accessibility can be achieved by the installation of acoustic materials.
9. The teacher’s voice needs to be at least 10 dB above the background noise, for hearing pupils, and at least 15 dB for hearing-impaired pupils in order to have good speech intelligibility.
10. The use of a radio aid, for a child with a hearing loss, can increase their acoustic accessibility by giving a good signal to noise ratio.

For further advice please contact the Sensory Service via phone: 028 25 661 258 or email: sensoryservice@eani.org.uk