AMY'S STORY

Amy is a member of Our Voice and has Down's syndrome.

She helps at a mainstream primary school, practicing reading with the pupils. Some of her pupils have additional needs and some don't, so we caught up with her to hear Amy's advice for inclusive teaching.

Tell us about your volunteering

I have been volunteering for many years. I help about 15 to 16 children to read. To begin with they have picture books with one word in then I help them to read story books at their level.

As part of this I also help to teach phonics. We have letters on cards with a picture, for example it says M for monkey, and on the back it says Mmmm.

I help with maths too. Instead of writing it down which can be confusing, showing examples can be better. For example: we have four spoons here. If I divide these spoons between four people, how many does each person get?

Is it a mainstream or special school?

I volunteer at a mainstream primary school.

This was the school that I attended between age 5 to 11. I have helped children with different needs including autism and learning difficulties.

What do you like about your role?

I love listening to the children read. I make it a lot of fun for them and I love just being with them. It makes me feel really happy, getting that relationship with a child is really good.

Have you learnt any new skills in this role?

When I worked at a mainstream nursery, I was taught how to feed a child through a tube in their tummy.

All children can learn in different ways. Sometimes I notice that a child is struggling with phonics I try to make it easier and repeat it more and make it fun perhaps call it a happy snake. I remember my TA making things fun to learn.

The teacher has said that she's glad I'm there, she says she likes that I make it fun.

Do you have any advice for other teachers about being inclusive?

My advice is to make sure everyone is included whatever their abilities or disabilities are. To do this takes time spent with each child. It's good to find out what each child needs to work on.

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