

*TaSSeLs*  
*Tactile Signing for Sensory Learners*

---

Report on a Pilot for the Oxfordshire SLT Special  
Schools team at Springfield School, Witney

January-July 2014

Oxford Health   
NHS Foundation Trust

Janet Trebilcock, SLT

# Brief background to the pilot

---

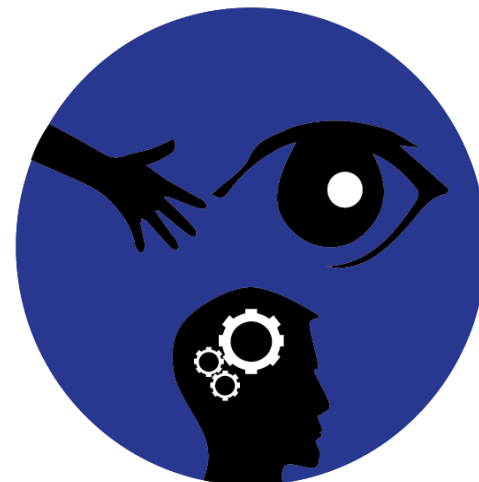
- Need for on-body signs for learners at P1-4 to supplement the Total Communication Environment
- Need for commitment to one approach and consistency across the county
- Need for co-ordination across teams – SENSS, MSI / VI, Early Years SLT
- Awareness of newly-published Tassels approach
- Pilot agreed after multi-agency discussions



# Overview of Tassels

---

- Developed in Sandwell by Joe Woodall (VI teacher) and Denise Charnock (SLT)
- Targeted and functional tactile signs for established everyday routines
- Alert signal and hand-under-hand method for fullest participation and active learning
- 3 approaches:
  - Hand-under-hand
  - Hand-under-hand (adapted)
  - On-body
- Supports comprehension and expression



# Strengths of Tassels

---

- RESPECT and DIGNITY
- Safeguarding considerations
- Multi-agency input
- Hand-under-hand methods
- Support material – manual, CD Rom, DVD, prompt cards, recording systems, targets linked to P levels, training
- Signs designed to maximise their communicative potential through touch
- Making sense within the chaos



# Aims of the pilot

---

- To trial the approach in one Special School
- To gain hands-on experience of the approach
- To evaluate the impact of the approach for the learners taking part
- To evaluate the approach in comparison with other approaches currently in use
- To evaluate the approach in the context of possible wider implementation within the county
- To identify any future service needs



# The Pilot: Key Facts

---

- Introduced to Springfield School Jan 2014
- 10 children from 5 classes, all P1-3 and VI
- Teachers and TAs trained in twilight sessions
- 3 individually-chosen signs for each learner, increasing to 5 if appropriate
- Liaison with parents
- Recording



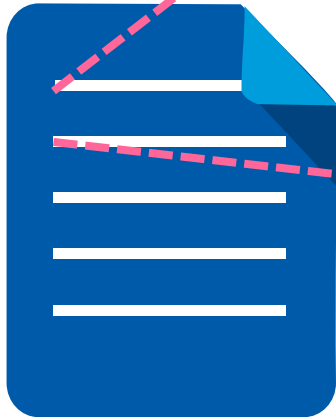
# Evaluation of the pilot

---

- IEP Objectives – outcomes
- Evaluation forms – quantitative data, descriptors from Jones AP 2001 (“Doorways”)
- Evaluation forms – qualitative data
- Data collection and analysis – progress expressed as percentage increase for each of the signs in each of the descriptors



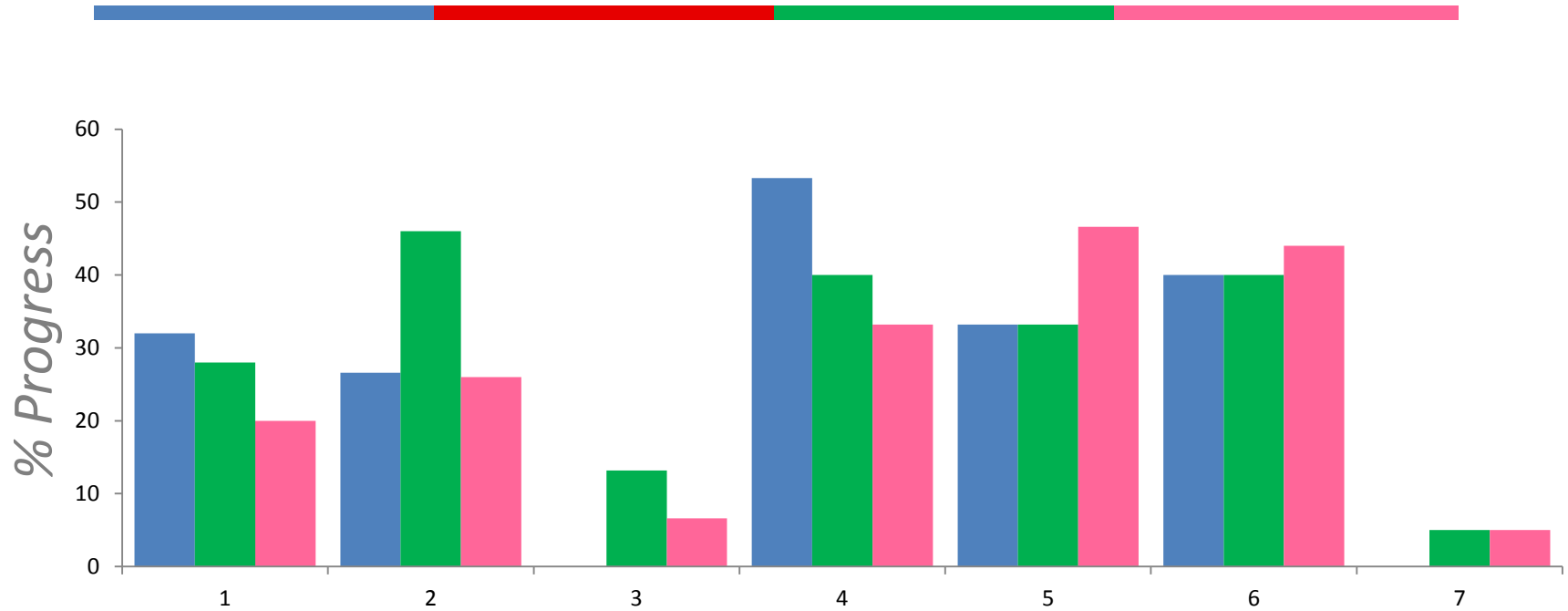
# Example Scoring Card



Sign 1							
	Intolerant	1	2	3	4	5	Tolerant
	Not engaged	1	2	3	4	5	Fully engaged
	Meaningless	1	2	3	4	5	Meaningful



# Data Analysis: Learners' Individual Progress



Tolerance



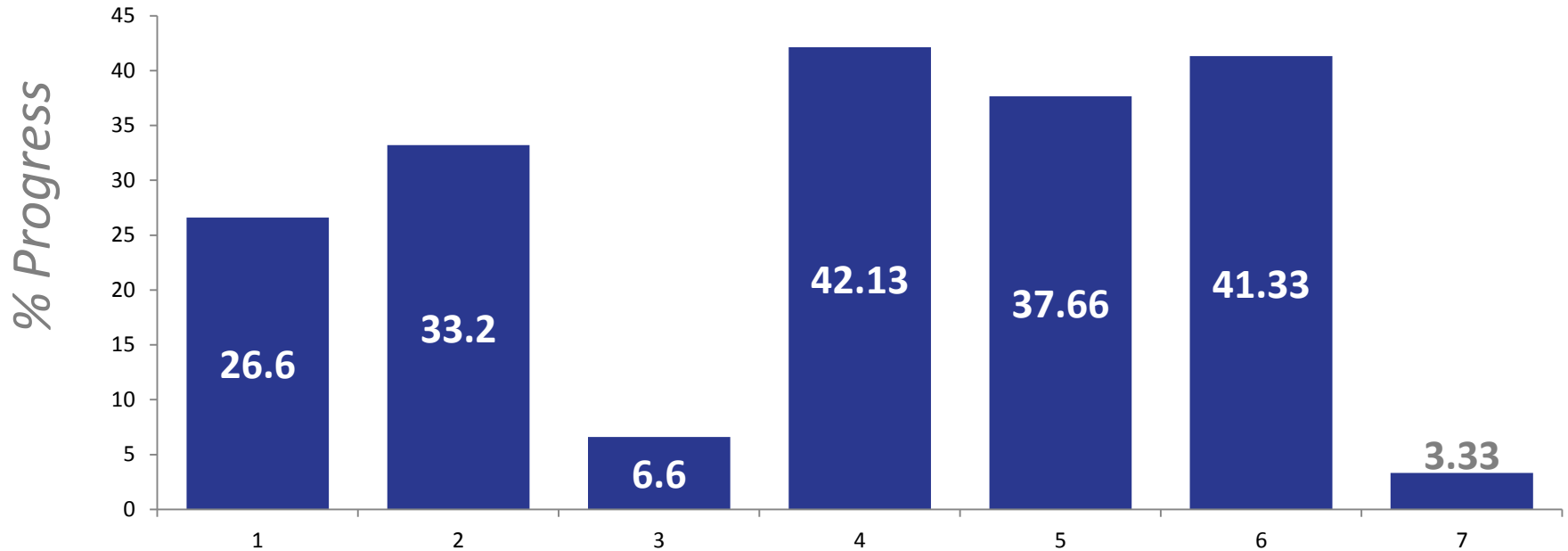
Engagement



Meaningfulness

*TaSSeLs*  
*Tactile Signing for Sensory Learners*

# Data Analysis: Learners' Overall Progress

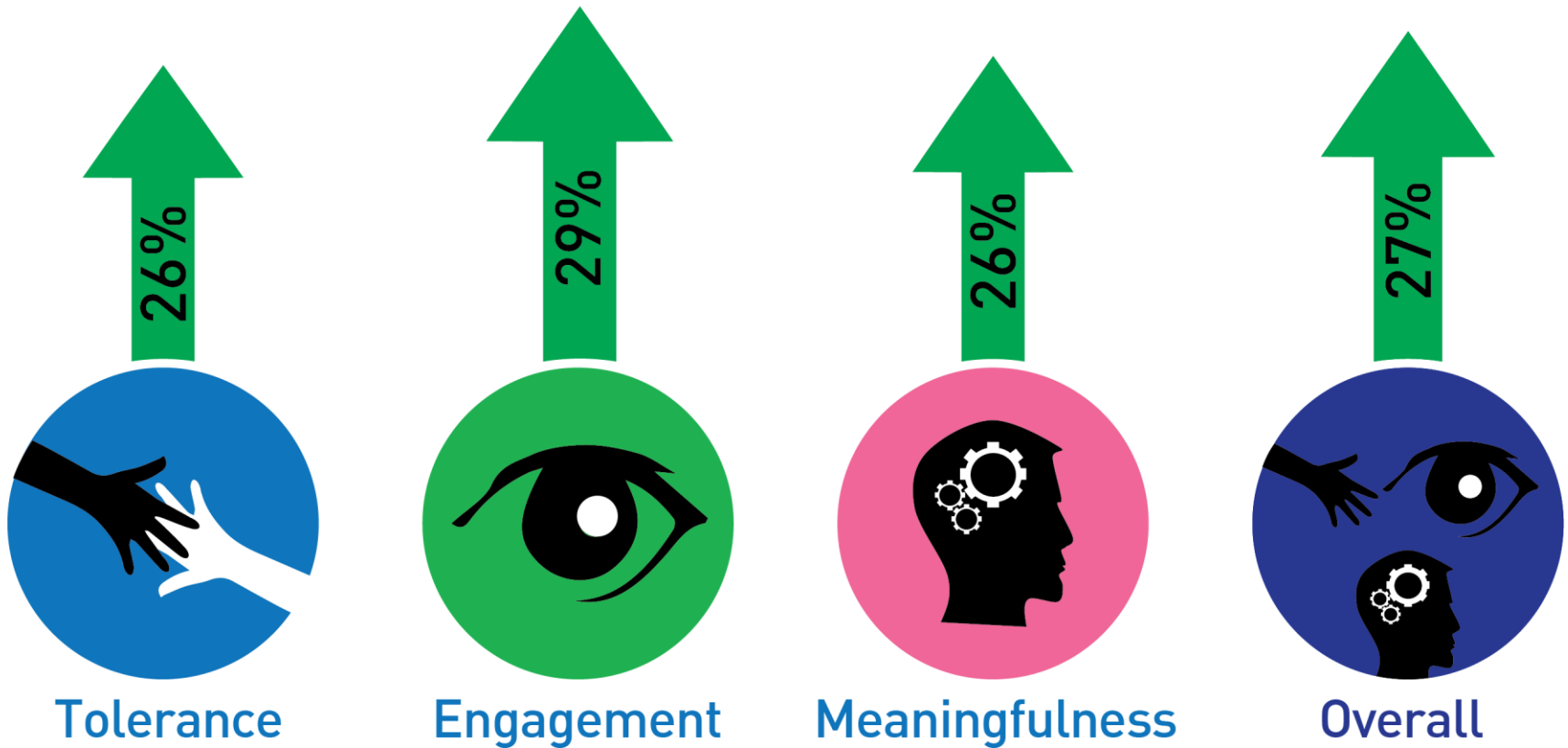


**Overall Progress**

*TaSSeLs*

*Tactile Signing for Sensory Learners*

# Data Analysis: Progress in descriptors



# Qualitative Data Analysis

---

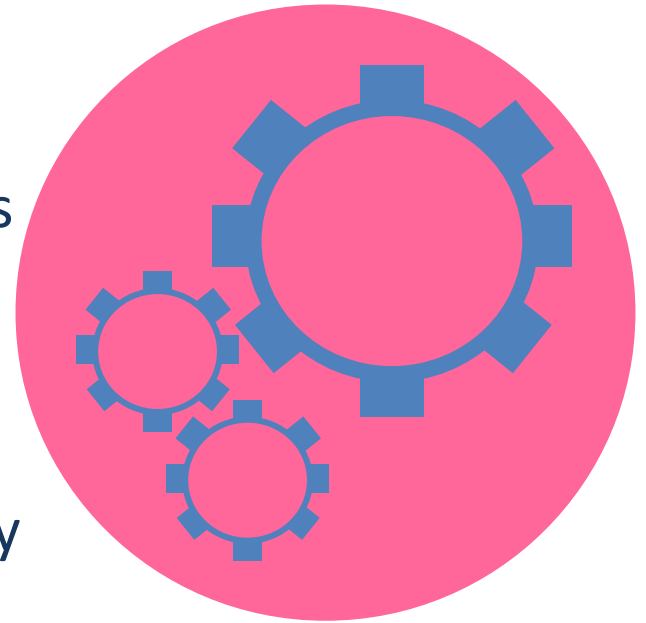
- “The sign ‘ready to move’ is particularly helpful to prepare ‘I’ for movement”
- “ ‘C’ has really responded well to the ‘hoist’ and ‘drink’ and ‘food’ signs and is engaged in these”
- “ ‘K’ is more aware of us signing with him”
- All teachers happy to continue with the approach



## Evaluation: limits of the pilot

---

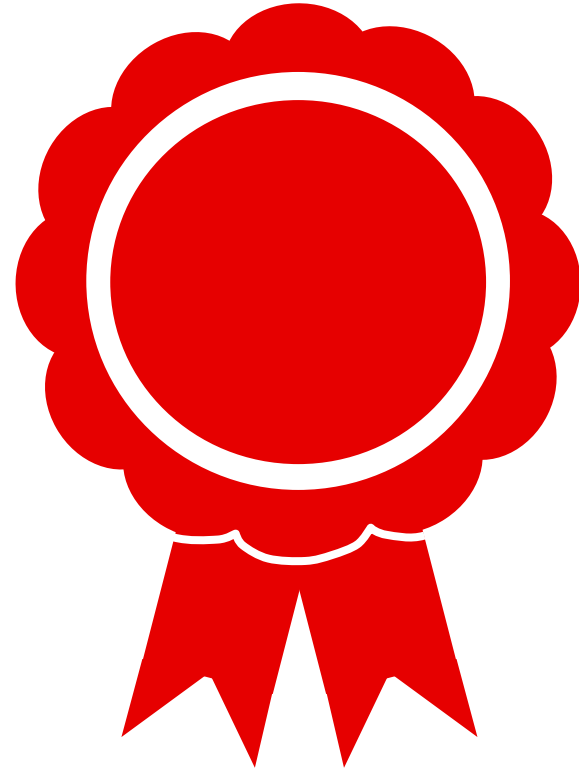
- Only 7 of original 10 learners' data analysed
- Subjective scoring
- No measure of consistency
- No evidence of responses to specific signs
- No evidence of reasons for progress or lack of it – receptiveness of the learner / severity of complex needs / enthusiasm and skill of staff / number and consistency of repetitions / age of learner etc
- Scratched the surface of Tassels



# Evaluation: Success of the pilot

---

- Progress evidenced for individuals
- Tassels accepted and used enthusiastically, added to tools used in the TCE
- Tassels experienced and evaluated
- Staff skills increased re: Tassels
- Staff skills increased re: cueing, engagement, hand-under-hand techniques



# Evaluation: Aims of the Pilot

---

- ✓ To trial the approach in one Special School
- ✓ To gain hands-on experience of the approach
- ✓ To evaluate the impact of the approach for the learners taking part
- To evaluate the approach in comparison with other approaches currently in use - ongoing
- To evaluate the approach in the context of possible wider application within the county - ongoing
- To identify any future service needs - **TRAINING!**



# Next Steps

---

- ✓ Disseminate pilot information across teams and with managers
- Review and develop approach at Springfield School, e.g. recording, objective setting around P levels, resources
- Take forward if consensus across teams
- Apply for funding for training – for SLTs and for education staff
- Keep learning!





# Useful information

---

**Manual:** Tassels - Tactile Signing for Sensory Learners:

For staff working with children and young people

Published by Pavilion Publishing and Media Ltd 2012

Cost: £125

**Training:** Level 1, Level 2 and Bespoke

**Email:** [tasselssigning@yahoo.com](mailto:tasselssigning@yahoo.com)



*TaSSeLs*  
*Tactile Signing for Sensory Learners*