

Case Study 2 - Mateo

Mateo is 12 years old and in 1st year. Mateo's subject teachers reported that he is a well-mannered boy, always polite and friendly to his classmates. He has one friend from his primary school who transitioned with him. He finds making friends difficult. He is an avid gamer and has some online friends who quest together. Mateo has been in Ireland since he was 4 years old, but English is not the primary language spoken in the home. His native language is Spanish. He is the oldest of 4 siblings. His teachers report that his strengths are in Spanish, maths, wood technology, engineering, and visual art. Due to literacy difficulties he finds English, history, geography, and science hard. He is exempt from Irish as he has a diagnosis of a Mild General Learning Difficulty (MGLD).

His primary school passport indicated that he received 2 years of EAL support in infant classes. His support in literacy continued throughout primary and his teachers identified his literacy needs as likely requiring ongoing support in post-primary. They informed the SET team that he found social interactions with large groups difficult, but was good socially in 1:1 or small groups. His language barrier was initially believed to be the cause of his continued difficulty with accessing the curriculum, however, following extensive interventions, the school investigated further. Following an assessment in 3rd class, he was diagnosed with MGLD. Mateo is exempt from Irish since 3rd class. His STen scores from primary were well below average for literacy and low average numeracy.

Mateo told the SET teacher that he preferred primary school, but likes finishing on a half day on Fridays, so he can game. He doesn't always complete his homework. He says it's all too hard. He is often late to classes that he doesn't like. He finds his locker hard to organise. He says his favourite subject is Spanish which he speaks fluently, his writing in Spanish is not as fluent as his speech. His other favourite subjects are all his practical subjects. He is good at Maths, and it is a personal strength.

His parents are unfamiliar with the Irish post-primary system as Mateo is their eldest child. They said he often tells them he has no homework or has done his homework in school. They said he is very good with his younger siblings and helps his mother when asked. He has built some gaming computers and is good at figuring out how things work. He has created stop motion Lego videos for his YouTube channel. He says he wants to be a professional YouTube gamer when he grows up. They said that he is very motivated by computers/gaming time and has to be told repeatedly to stop playing and go to sleep at night. They turn off the internet at 10pm, but sometimes he turns it back on and games late into the night.

The SET team's assessments identified Mateo's personal strengths in numeral operations, numerical reasoning, reading comprehension, working memory and processing speed. He doesn't like writing, his spelling is well below average, and his word reading is slow, but quite accurate.