



# Understanding the Graduated Approach

Sandwell SENDIASS



**Changing childhoods.  
Changing lives.**

# Aims:

- Understand Graduated Approach process
- Be aware of the legal background
- Know what to expect
- Know about parents rights

# What is the Graduated Approach?

- ▶ SEND Code of Practice 2015
- ▶ 6.44 Where a pupil is identified as having SEN, schools should take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place.
- ▶ This SEN support should take the form of a four-part cycle through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the pupil's needs and of what supports the pupil in making good progress and securing good outcomes.
- ▶ This is known as the graduated approach
  - ▶ It draws on more detailed approaches, more frequent review and more specialist expertise in successive cycles in order to match interventions to the SEN of children and young people.

# Background

- Prior to the SEND reforms SEN support was over 3 levels: School Action, School Action Plus and Statements
- During the SEND reforms the Code of Practice was reissued in September 2014 and the School Action and School Action Plus categories were put together under the umbrella term of “SEN Support”

# Process and Procedures

- The Code recommends what is referred to as the **graduated approach** which has **four stages of action** : **Assess; Plan; Do; Review**
- Schools should assess each pupil's current skills and levels of attainment on entry and regular further assessments should take place. These should seek to identify pupils making less than expected progress.



# Areas of Need

- The Code identifies four “broad areas of need” with detail given in relation to each area and the expectation is that schools will plan for these and ensure that their staff have relevant training and are equipped to respond.
- The four areas are:
  - Communication and interaction;
  - Cognition and learning;
  - Social, emotional and mental health;
  - Sensory and/or physical needs.

# The four areas of need

- ▶ **Communication and interaction**
- ▶ Code of Practice:
- ▶ 6.28 Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. The profile for every child with SLCN is different and their needs may change over time. They may have difficulty with one, some or all of the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives.
- ▶ 6.29 Children and young people with ASD, including Asperger's Syndrome and Autism, are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction. They may also experience difficulties with language, communication and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others.

# The four areas of need

- ▶ **Cognition and learning**
- ▶ Code of Practice
- ▶ 6.30 Support for learning difficulties may be required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation. Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and associated difficulties with mobility and communication, through to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), where children are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment.
- ▶ 6.31 Specific learning difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.



# The four areas of need

- ▶ **Social, emotional and mental health difficulties**
- ▶ Code of Practice
- ▶ 6.32 Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.
- ▶ 6.33 Schools and colleges should have clear processes to support children and young people, including how they will manage the effect of any disruptive behaviour so it does not adversely affect other pupils.

# The four areas of need

- ▶ **Sensory and/or physical needs**
- ▶ Code of Practice
- ▶ 6.34 Some children and young people require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time. Many children and young people with vision impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) will require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning, or habilitation support. Children and young people with an MSI have a combination of vision and hearing difficulties.
- ▶ 6.35 Some children and young people with a physical disability (PD) require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

# SEN Support in schools

- ▶ **Special educational provision in schools**
- ▶ Code of Practice
- ▶ 6.36 Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff.
- ▶ Schools should assess each pupil's current skills and levels of attainment on entry and regular further assessments should take place. These should seek to identify pupils making less than expected progress.

# Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle

- ▶ The cycle of **Assess, Plan, Do** and **Review** is set out in more detail in the Code of Practice.
- ▶ **Assess**
  - ▶ It is the class teacher or subject teacher (working with the SENCO) who is responsible for carrying out a clear analysis of a pupil's needs, drawing on teacher assessments and experience of the pupil.
- ▶ **Plan**
  - ▶ Where it is decided to provide a pupil with SEN Support, the parents **must** be notified. All teachers and support staff who work with a pupil should be made aware of their needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided and any teaching strategies that are required.
- ▶ **Do**
  - ▶ The class or subject teacher retains the responsibility for working with the child on a daily basis. They should work closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff involved and the SENCO should support the class or subject teacher.
- ▶ **Review**
  - ▶ Reviews should take place and inform feed back into the analysis of the child's needs. The Code is not prescriptive about how often reviews should take place. However given the requirement to meet with parents three times a year (see below under Focus on reporting) good practice would suggest that such reviews will be at least termly.
  - ▶ The decision to involve specialists can be taken at any time and should always involve parents.

# Identifying SEN in schools

- ▶ Code of Practice
- ▶ 6.14 All schools should have a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEN. The benefits of early identification are widely recognised - identifying need at the earliest point and then making effective provision improves long-term outcomes for the child or young person.
- ▶ 6.15 A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age. Making higher quality teaching normally available to the whole class is likely to mean that fewer pupils will require such support. Such improvements in whole-class provision tend to be more cost effective and sustainable.

# Identifying SEN in schools

- ▶ 6.17 Class and subject teachers, supported by the senior leadership team, should make regular assessments of progress for all pupils. These should seek to identify pupils making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances. This can be characterised by progress which:
  - ▶ • is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
  - ▶ • fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress
  - ▶ • fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers
  - ▶ • widens the attainment gap
- ▶ 6.19 The first response to such progress should be high quality teaching targeted at their areas of weakness. Where progress continues to be less than expected the class or subject teacher, working with the SENCO, should assess whether the child has SEN. While informally gathering evidence (including the views of the pupil and their parents) schools should not delay in putting in place extra teaching or other rigorous interventions designed to secure better progress, where required. The pupil's response to such support can help identify their particular needs.

# A focus on reporting

- ▶ Schools **must** provide an annual report to parents on their child's progress.
- ▶ Where a pupil is receiving SEN Support, schools should talk to parents regularly, to set clear outcomes and review progress towards them. **Schools should meet parents at least three times each year.** A record of the outcomes, action and support agreed through the discussion should be kept and shared with all the appropriate school staff. This record should be given to the pupil's parents.

# Is it SEN?

## Code of Practice

6.21 Persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours do not necessarily mean that a child or young person has SEN. Where there are concerns, there should be an assessment to determine whether there are any causal factors such as undiagnosed learning difficulties, difficulties with communication or mental health issues.

6.22 Professionals should also be alert to other events that can lead to learning difficulties or wider mental health difficulties, such as bullying or bereavement. Such events will not always lead to children having SEN but it can have an impact on wellbeing and sometimes this can be severe. Schools should ensure they make appropriate provision for a child's short-term needs in order to prevent problems escalating. Where there are long-lasting difficulties schools should consider whether the child might have SEN.

6.23 Slow progress and low attainment do not necessarily mean that a child has SEN and should not automatically lead to a pupil being recorded as having SEN. However, they may be an indicator of a range of learning difficulties or disabilities. Equally, it should not be assumed that attainment in line with chronological age means that there is no learning difficulty or disability. Some learning difficulties and disabilities occur across the range of cognitive ability and, left unaddressed may lead to frustration, which may manifest itself as disaffection, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

\*Difficulties related solely to learning English as an additional language are not SEN



# Involving specialists

- ▶ 6.58 Where a pupil continues to make less than expected progress, despite evidence-based support and interventions that are matched to the pupil's area of need, the school should consider involving specialists, including those secured by the school itself or from outside agencies.
- ▶ 6.59 Schools may involve specialists at any point to advise them on early identification of SEN and effective support and interventions. A school should always involve a specialist where a pupil continues to make little or no progress or where they continue to work at levels substantially below those expected of pupils of a similar age despite evidence-based SEN support delivered by appropriately trained staff. The pupil's parents should always be involved in any decision to involve specialists.
- ▶ The specialist include Inclusion Support (0121 569 2777), OT, Physio, SALT, CAMHS.
- ▶ A referral to IS should always involve a parent signing an IS1 form, to give consent.

# Next Steps

- ▶ **Requesting an Education, Health and Care needs assessment**
- ▶ 6.63 SEN support should be adapted or replaced depending on how effective it has been in achieving the agreed outcomes. Where, despite the school having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEN of the child or young person, the child or young person has not made expected progress, the school or parents should consider requesting an Education, Health and Care needs assessment. To inform its decision the local authority will expect to see evidence of the action taken by the school as part of SEN support.

# Sources of information and support

- ▶ IPSEA: [ipsea.org.uk](http://ipsea.org.uk)
- ▶ Tribunal Helpline: **0845 602 9579**
- ▶ DfE publications:
- ▶ SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years
- ▶ Special educational needs and disability: managing the September 2014 changes to the system 4<sup>th</sup> edition, October 2016
- ▶ Sandwell SEN Guide for Parents and Carers