

# Section 1 Introduction and Key Documents & Guidance Notes



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# Responsibilities of Schools and Settings

All early years and education providers are responsible for doing their best to ensure that special educational needs are met. *This means:*

Identifying needs early

Ensuring that the views of parents, carers, children and young people inform assessment planning and decision making; the SEND Code of Practice places great importance on involving parents, children and young people in decisions.

Knowing precisely where children and young people with SEN are in their learning and development, and planning for their next small steps

Having high aspirations and setting challenging & achievable outcomes for learners with SEN

Putting in place effective, evidence-based interventions individually tailored to needs

Tracking progress towards these goals regularly and reviewing the appropriateness of provision and ensuring that it impacts on progress.

# Good inclusive practice involves:

**Good quality teaching** is provided for all learners, and learners with the most difficulties are taught by skilled teachers. Additional interventions are not a substitute for weak or ineffective practice.

**Staff are well trained.** All teaching staff have continuous professional development and are linked to the school whole CPD programme confident in making their teaching accessible to learners with SEN.

**The curriculum** offered meets the needs of all learners.

The school has an **Equality Scheme** that is updated annually and an **Accessibility plan** that is reviewed every 3 years. These are available on the school website

The **teaching and learning policy** is understood by all staff. It reflects equalities legislation and accessibility requirements and actively promotes overcoming barriers to learning for all children taking into account individual differences.

The **school improvement plan for SEND** is informed by an analysis of qualitative and quantitative data and contains strategies to improve the outcomes of all current and future pupils.

**Smooth transitions** between key stages, year groups and other settings are planned for and reviewed.

All learners are **assessed on entry** to the school. These assessments are used to plan learning outcomes.

The **progress of all learners is tracked** against national benchmarks.

The school provides a warm, safe and empathetic ethos where children have the confidence to share their concerns with staff, and know that they will be addressed, in order to support their **emotional well-being**.

The school inspires **parent/carer confidence** by establishing a reciprocal relationship with them as partners in their children's learning, making best use of parents or carers' knowledge of their child's development.

The **learning environment** of the school is supportive to all learners and enables teachers to respond to predicted and un-predicted need.

**Governors monitor the impact** of the whole school response to inclusion and the impact on learners with SEN.

The governing body **annually update information and publish a SEN Information Report** about the school's policy for learners with SEN and what provision is available in accordance with the SEN (Information) Regulations 2015 (Code of Practice para 6.79). This includes detailed information about the school's arrangements for identifying, assessing and making provision for learners with SEN, an annual review of the Equalities Scheme, and the school's Accessibility plan.

The school has a **SENCo** who is a qualified teacher and who has relevant experience or a recognised SEN qualification.

Governors ensure that arrangements are in place to support learners with medical conditions.

There are **care plans** for learners with health and personal care needs.

The quality of teaching for learners with SEN and their progress is a core part of the school's **performance management arrangements**.

The school ensures **joined up planning to achieve good outcomes** for vulnerable children, e.g. those who are looked after, have social care needs or are children of service personnel, and who may also have a special educational need.

# Inclusive good quality teaching involves:

**Establishing that lack of progress is not due to poor teaching.** Observe class teaching and evaluate whether there are adjustments that could be made to support learning before proceeding with individual assessment.

**Maximising progress for learners who have additional needs.** As for all learners, this requires a clear picture of individual learning strengths, weaknesses and independence. The starting point should always be assessment – formative, summative and standardised. In addition to using data, use a variety of other means to build up a picture including observation, learner self-assessment, parental comments, analysis of scripts, book scrutiny and teacher feedback.

**Giving learners 'hard work they can do'.** Use data gathered to plan carefully to meet the needs of each individual; however, this should not be about working harder to give every child a different activity or work sheet. Instead, focus on a skill-based learning objective for all, differentiated support, additional resources available and very clear success criteria.

**Ensuring that all pupils have access to a range of teaching and learning styles.**

**Ensuring that learners are not overly dependent on adults.** Research shows that learners need to develop independence in order to learn effectively. If a learner is constantly working beyond their current skill level they may well be at risk of 'learned helplessness'. Learners need to move from dependence on an adult, through modelled, shared and guided group activities to a point where they are sufficiently skilled and confident to work independently on their own. The teacher needs to plan carefully for learners to move through these steps into independence in all areas of the curriculum.

**Teachers regularly teaching every group in the classroom** in order to be absolutely sure that they know the small next step each learner needs to take in their learning.

**Using multi-sensory resources for all learners across all key stages** to ensure that no stigma is attached to their use. Use resources creatively to maintain engagement.

# Section 1: Guidance Notes

## What to do if you think a child has a Special Educational Need (SEN)

### Overall approach

Many children with complex needs have these identified very early. For other children difficulties may only become evident as they grow and develop, and as they learn and interact in new and different environments. Some children and young people have special educational needs that result from an illness or accident. The approach to identifying a special educational need should be part of a school or setting's overall approach to monitoring the development and progress of all learners.

### Less than expected progress

A good understanding of a learner's starting points and regular checks on progress are the basis for identifying when a learner is making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances. Children start settings and schools with varied experiences and usually need a little time to settle in and engage with new learning opportunities. The progress check at aged 2 and assessment at the end of the EYFS are two important early points for formally reviewing progress.

Less than expected progress is progress which:

is significantly slower than that of 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.

(Code of Practice, 2015 Section 6.17)

### What to do when a child is making less than expected progress

For many learners who are not making expected progress the precise area of need is not clear at the outset. Some will have needs that span more than one area. Usually evidence is gathered over time, although in some circumstances a child may appear in school with little history or may suddenly develop a need as a result of an accident or injury. In the first instance it is always helpful to bring together all of the available evidence, including information from parents and the learner him/herself, to make a detailed individual assessment of need. Use the Identification of Need section to support you in gathering your evidence.

### Categories of special educational need

The broad areas of need and the subdivisions of need used in this guidance are:

- Communication and interaction needs (C&I)
- Cognition and learning needs (C&L)
  - Learning needs (LD)
  - Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) (KS1 onwards)
- Social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH)
- Sensory and/or physical needs (S&P)
  - Hearing Impairment (HI)
  - Visual Impairment (VI)

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- Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI) (Foundation years)
- Physical difficulties (PD)

## Specific circumstances

Progress can be affected by a number of factors inside and outside of the setting or school including family crises, bereavement and bullying. Some of these will not necessarily lead to a learner having SEN but may cause significant short term needs.

### Behavioural Needs

**Behavioural needs** do not necessarily mean that a child has a SEN, but consistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours can indicate underlying and unmet needs and so it's important to look across the range of indicators to check where difficulties originate. Behaviour is a form of communication.

### Domestic circumstances

If it is thought housing, family or other domestic circumstances may be contributing to the presenting behaviour a multi-agency approach, supported by the use of the **Common Assessment Framework** (CAF) may be appropriate.

### English as an additional language

The **identification and assessment of the SEN of children or young people whose first language is not English**: Schools and early years providers will need to look carefully at all aspects of a child or young person's performance in different areas of learning and development or subjects to establish whether lack of progress is due to limitations in their command of English or if it arises from a SEN or both.

### Looked After Children

**Children who are Looked After** by the local authority will already have a Social Care Plan that includes a Personal Education Plan (PEP) and a Health Plan. It may be through making assessments for these plans that an SEN is identified. Any planning for SEN needs to dovetail with and add to existing planning and involve other professionals and foster carers who are working with the child.

### Children of Service personnel

**Children of Service personnel** face particular challenges. The mobility of service personnel means that their children may face more transitions than most learners, sometimes at short notice. There may also be anxiety and related emotional difficulties resulting from the deployment of family members to operational areas. Settings and schools need to ensure that the service related lifestyle of these children doesn't lead to any delay in identifying or providing for any SEN, and that any records kept are transferred as quickly as possible if the child moves. The Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) within the Ministry of Defence can provide advice and guidance.

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. Code of Practice 6.44