



**Special Educational
Needs & Disability (SEND)**

Information, Advice
and Support Service
for children, young people and parents

Identifying SEN in Schools

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.

A pupil has special educational needs (SEN) where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision (SEP). SEP is provision which is *different from* or *additional to* that which is normally available to pupils of the same age.

Class and subject teachers should make regular assessments of progress for all pupils. Assessments should seek to identify pupils making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances.

Assessments of progress may consider areas other than academic attainment – for example, the wider developmental or social skills required in order to make a successful transition to adult life.

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 any particular special educational needs.

For some children, SEN can be identified at an early age. However, for other children and young people, their difficulties only become evident as they develop. All those who work with children and young people should be alert to emerging difficulties and respond early.

Parents/carers know their children best and it is important that all professionals listen when parents express concerns about their child's development. They should also listen to and address any concerns raised by children and young people themselves.

Slow progress and low attainment do not necessarily mean that a child has 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



Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND)

Information, Advice
and Support Service
for children, young people and parents

difficulty or disability. Some learning difficulties and disabilities occur across the range of cognitive ability and, if left unaddressed, may lead to frustration, disaffection, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

The SEN Code of Practice categorises special educational needs into the 4 broad areas education providers should plan for. These categories are primarily to help schools in planning to meet needs and are not intended to label children and young people. In practice, individual children or young people often have needs that cut across more than one area and their needs may change over time.

Communication and interaction

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.

Children and young people with ASC 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.

Cognition and learning

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 may have 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.

Specific learning difficulties (SpLD) affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.



Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND)

Information, Advice
and Support Service
for children, young people and parents

Social, emotional and mental health difficulties

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. They 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.

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.

Sensory and/or physical needs

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. 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. Children and young people with an MSI have a combination of vision and hearing difficulties.

Meeting special educational needs

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.

High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching.

In deciding whether to make special educational provision, the teacher and SENCO should consider all of the information gathered from within the school about the pupil's progress, as well as any more specialised assessments from external agencies and professionals.

Early discussions with the pupil and their parent/s should focusses on areas of strength as well as difficulty and include the parents' and pupil's own concerns and, together you should consider and agree what



Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND)

Information, Advice
and Support Service
for children, young people and parents

outcomes you are seeking (i.e., what we are hoping to achieve) and the next steps to help the child achieve those goals.

Agreed outcomes and expected progress will underpin any discussions about special educational provision and any plan should include the views and wishes of the pupil and their parents.

The outcomes considered should include those needed to make successful transitions between phases of education and, from Year 9 onwards, to prepare for adult life.

A clear date for reviewing progress should be agreed and the parent, pupil and teaching staff should each be clear about how they will help the pupil reach the expected outcomes. The overriding purpose of this early action is to help the pupil achieve their identified outcomes and remove any barriers to learning.

Where it is decided that a pupil does have SEN, the decision should be recorded in the school records and the pupil's parents must be formally informed that special educational provision is being made. Arrangements for appropriate support should be made through the school's approach to SEN Support.

Contact Us:

 **Confidential helpline: 01628 683182**

 **ias@rbwm.gov.uk**

Web: www.ias-rbwm.info

**Riverside Centre, West Dean, Maidenhead
SL6 7JB**