

A Whole School Approach to Identifying Special Educational Needs (SEN) at SEN Support

What is a Special Educational Need?

A child or young person has a special educational need if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child of compulsory school age or a young person is considered to have a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:



- *'has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or*
- *has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions'.*

A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if he or she is likely to fall within the above definition when they reach compulsory school age, or would do so if they did not receive special educational provision.

(SEND Code of Practice 2015, para xiv)

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

(SEND Code of Practice 2015, paragraph 6.17)

However, it is also important to recognise that:

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.

(SEND Code of Practice 2015, paragraph 6.23)

Identifying and assessing SEN for children or young people whose first language is not English requires particular care. Schools should 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 SEN or a disability. Difficulties related solely to limitations in English as an additional language are not SEN.

(SEND Code of Practice 2015, paragraph 6.24)

What are the Types of Special Educational Need?

The SEND Code of Practice 2015 identifies four broad areas of need. Many children have needs in more than one area but it is helpful to make a decision about the primary area of need.

Communication and Interaction

This area includes speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), which could mean difficulties with speech production, the understanding of language, the expression of language or a combination of all three. It also includes difficulties with the social use of language.



Children with a diagnosis of autism or autistic spectrum disorders, including Asperger's syndrome, have needs in this area.

Children with communication and interaction difficulties may or may not also have learning difficulties.

Cognition and Learning

This area includes general learning difficulties (which may be moderate or severe), profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and specific learning difficulties (SpLD).



SpLDs include: dyslexia (difficulties with reading and spelling), dyscalculia (difficulties with number and calculation), and dyspraxia (or 'developmental coordination disorder', difficulties with motor planning). People with one or more SpLDs have a 'spiky profile' of attainment, with areas of strength (sometimes very high) and areas of need.

All children in this category have a form of learning difficulty.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties

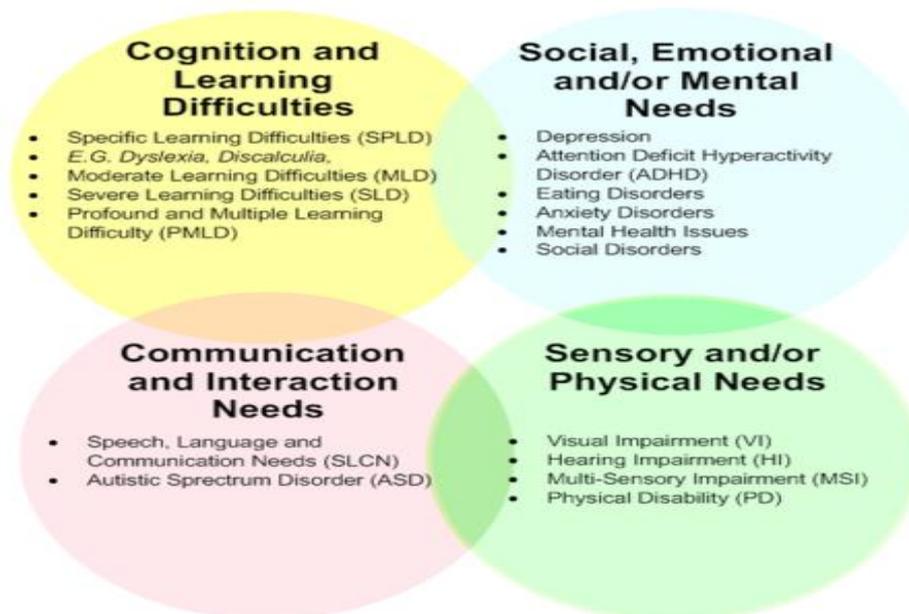
Challenging behaviours are displayed for many reasons, which may be indicative of underlying mental health difficulties (such as anxiety or depression), or emotional issues (such as disordered attachment).



Some children have disorders such as ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) or ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) which affect how they behave. It is crucial to look for the underlying causes of any difficulties with behaviour and/or emotional state, and aim to support these, rather than just dealing with the presenting behaviour. For some children with SEMH difficulties, the nature of these difficulties will mean that they have learning difficulties, either temporarily or in the long term.

Sensory and/or physical needs

This area includes sensory impairments, such as visual impairment (VI) and hearing impairment (HI), as well as physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy. Children with these disabilities will usually access support from the PIMs team.



How Can a Special Educational Need be Identified?

The SEND Code of Practice 2015 states that when an identification of SEN is being considered schools should ensure that the following provision is in place:



“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. Schools should regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching for all pupils, including those at risk of underachievement. This includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving, teachers’ understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils and their knowledge of the SEN most frequently encountered.”

(Paragraph 6.37 SEND Code of Practice)

“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, alongside national data and expectations of progress. This should include high quality and accurate formative assessment, using effective tools and early assessment materials.”

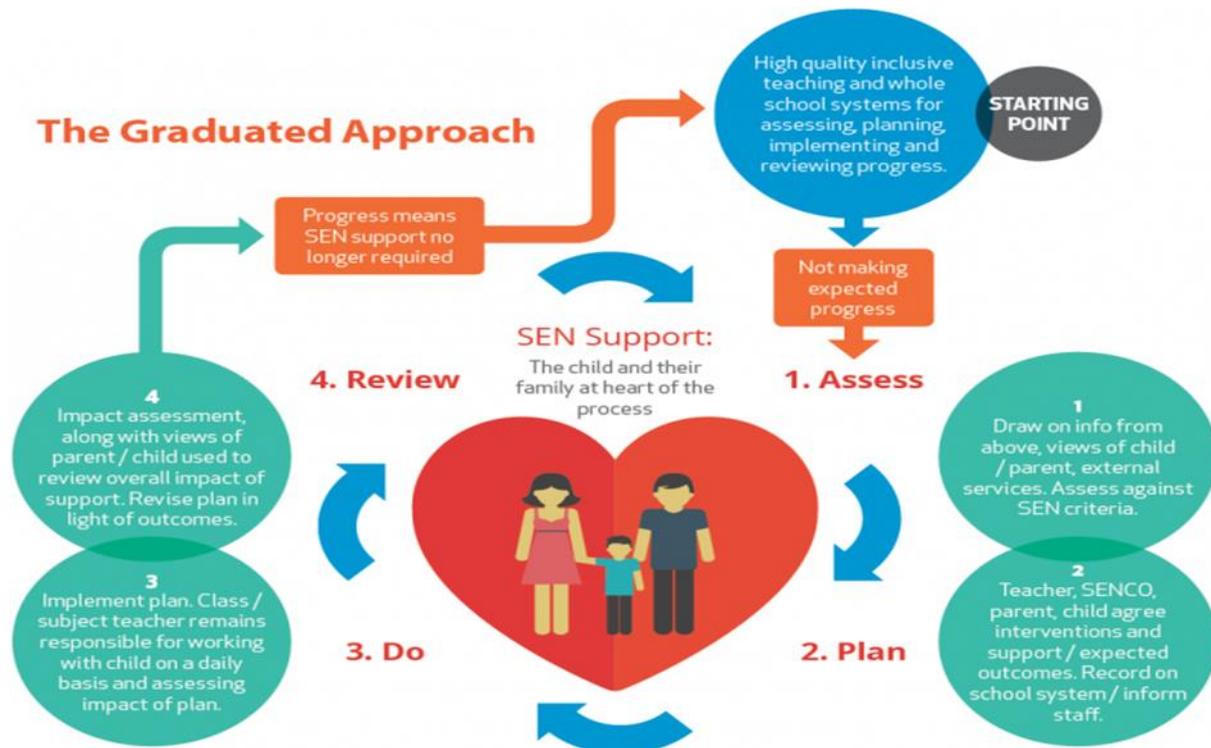
(Paragraph 6.38 SEND Code of Practice)

Who is Responsible for Identifying Children with SEN?

All teaching staff have a responsibility to identify children who may have SEN. Teaching staff should raise any concerns with the school SENCO and be proactive in completing the ‘Initial Teacher Concerns’ document (appendix1). It is essential that teachers identify what has been done to try and meet the needs of the child as part of universal provision and have reviewed the impact of specific strategies/support used. The SEND identification flowchart (appendix2) provides a clear breakdown of the steps involved in the SEN identification process.



The Assess Plan Do Review process should be implemented for at least one cycle by the class teacher before seeking advice from the SENCO. This will enable the class teacher to show what adaptations have been made to class provision and the impact of those changes. It may also be relevant for the class teacher to carry out some additional assessment at this stage. Assessments that class teachers have access to are listed in appendix 3. The Assess Plan Do Review process is shown below:

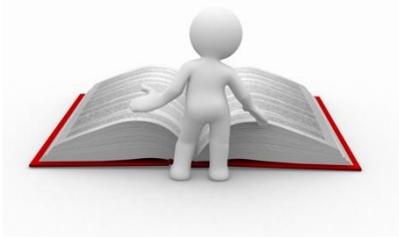


What Information Should be Used to Help in Identifying SEN?

It will be necessary for the teacher to have evidenced their concern by gathering and analysing a number of different data sources, including:



- Evidence from observations of the child engaged in different activities
- Evidence from any tracking and assessments
- Information about the child in and out of school from parents or carers
- Records of the child's achievements
- Information about school attendance
- Discussion with the child about his/her learning
- Information from any other agencies involved with the child or family, where appropriate.



It will also be necessary to reference Somerset's Core Standards document, particularly the sections 'what we will do', 'how we will do it' and why we will do it' under the Universal provision and SEN Support columns. When considering SEN Support it will be important to demonstrate that the provision stated under 'Universal' is consistently being provided.

What Should a Class Teacher do if they have a Concern that a Child may have SEN?

The Initial Concerns checklist (appendix 1) should be used to help collate all of the relevant data on the child and the steps listed in the SEND identification flowchart (appendix 2) followed. In addition the following questions should be considered:

- Are there any gaps in learning? Have we addressed those?
- What have we learnt about what works well for the pupil (e.g. teaching approach, learning activities)?
- How appropriate is the differentiation?
- How have we involved the pupil in their own learning?
- What interventions have been used?
- Are the interventions delivered by a skilled adult?
- Are they monitored?
- Do they impact on outcomes- if not why not?



What Should Happen Next?



Once the Assess Plan Do Review process has been completed for at least one cycle and assessments have been made by the class teacher of the child's needs a decision should be made in consultation with the SENCO whether:

1. Further adjustments are required to classroom provision, the impact of which will then be monitored and reviewed after a term.
2. Further adjustments/support is provided as part of general classroom provision but the child placed on a 'concern' list. The impact of which will then be monitored and reviewed after a term.

3. Additional assessment carried out by the SENCO and, if relevant, the child is placed on the SEN register at SEN Support, the 'Plan' section of the Assess Plan Do Review process is then implemented.
4. It is important that parents are involved in the above process, are clearly aware of the concerns of the school and how their child is being supported.

How will the Impact of any Additional Support be Measured for those Identified as SEN Support?



When evaluating the impact of additional provision provided the agreed outcomes recorded at the 'plan' stage will be used to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of the additional provision. The Assess Plan Do Review cycle is then started again to determine what should happen next for the child and whether they should continue to be classified as 'SEN Support.'