

# SEN Identification Guidance

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Does evidence indicate concerns/needs meet criteria for SEN?



## Introduction

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This guidance is designed to support the decision making for pupils causing schools concern because of delayed progress in learning and/or other areas of development. The guidance has been written using:

- SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years, January 2015
- Children and Families Act, 2014
- Equalities Act, 2010
- Teachers' Standards, 2012.

The guidance is to be used by staff in schools and colleges when identifying children and young people with SEND. This guidance can be used alongside the '**SEN Support (SENS) Flowchart**'. Staff should be aware of the need to continually monitor their response and subsequent provision for children and young people with SEND due to their changing needs.

Staff must work with children and young people, and their parents/carers to plan, deliver and monitor the impact of the provision they make.

The '**Graduated Approach Plan**' can be used to support the planning and review of provision being made at any point in the process of identifying whether a pupil has SEN, and can also be used once a pupil has been identified as having a Special Educational Need alongside the '**Support and Achievement Plan**'.

# Special Educational Needs and Special Educational Provision

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The definition of **Special Educational Needs** is stated as follows:

***“A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.***

***A child of compulsory school age or a young person has 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.”***

SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years, 2015, p15-16

**Special Educational Provision** is described as follows:

***“For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers. For a child under two years of age, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.***

***A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if he or she is likely to fall within the definition above or would so do if special educational provision was not made for them (Section 20 Children and Families Act 2014).”***

SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years, 2015, p16

## Identifying and supporting SEN

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In identifying and supporting children and young people with SEN schools should be aware of the need for all pupils to access high quality teaching, appropriately differentiated and personalised. In addition schools need to be aware of expectations for all teachers within the context of a whole school approach to responding to pupils whose progress is causing concern and who may have SEN.

The SEND Code of Practice, 2015 states:

***“The quality of teaching for pupils with SEN, and the progress made by pupils, should be a core part of the school’s performance management arrangements and its approach to professional development for all teaching and support staff. School leaders and teaching staff, including the SENCO, should identify any patterns in the identification of SEN, both within the school and in comparison with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching.”***

SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years, 2015, p93

Teachers Standards, 2012 (DfE), clearly sets out the expectations for all teachers to be responsible for all the learners in their class(es). This includes the need to set high expectations for all pupils, promote the progress and attainment for all pupils, plan for the learning of pupils and know how to adapt their teaching to support the strengths and needs of all pupils.

SEN is likely to be a factor in a child or young person’s learning and development where:

1. Successful learning calls for special educational provision to be made, that is ***‘additional to’*** and ***‘different from’*** that generally available for pupils of the same age.
2. Learning appears to indicate less than expected progress is being made. Less than expected progress is seen to be 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: 0-25 years, 2015, p95

3. Progress or development in areas other than attainment may also be causing concern.

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When a child or young person's progress or development is less than expected in learning, or in another identified area, schools should consider how the child/young person responds to high quality, differentiated teaching or support targeted on the identified area(s) of weakness.

- What is the impact of high quality teaching?
- What is the impact of any specific support – including differentiation and/or intervention?

If, after high quality teaching and initial support/intervention targeted at the area(s) of weakness, progress continues to be less than expected consideration should be given to whether the child/young person has SEN.

Consideration must also be given to any disability under the Equality Act 2010 and any reasonable adjustments necessary to support the learning and development, including any provision of auxiliary aids.

Before concluding a child/young person has SEN the school should consider, and plan a response to, any other contributory factors in exploring the reasons for delayed progress and or development. These factors can include:

- The quality of teaching in class
- Attendance
- The need for pastoral support (including any social care or health needs)
- Specific personal circumstances impacting on the ability to learn and thrive in an educational setting

Consideration of which of the categories of SEN in the four broad areas of need should be made for a child or young person in relation to their needs:

- **Communication and interaction:** including Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN); Autistic Spectrum (ASD)
- **Cognition and learning:** including Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD); Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD); Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD); and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)
- **Social, emotional and mental health difficulties:** including Behaviour difficulties; and recognised disorders such as Attention Deficit and Hyperactive Disorder; Attachment Disorder; etc (SEMH)
- **Sensory and/or physical needs:** including Hearing Impairment (HI); Visual Impairment (VI); Multi-sensory Impairment (MSI); Physical Disability (PD)

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Further information to support schools in identifying the appropriate category of SEN needs can be found in the '**SEN Category Descriptors**', these include the categories included in the Code of Practice, and other categories schools may wish to use to indicate 'additional needs'.

Some disabilities and learning difficulties require a diagnosis by an appropriate professional. Schools should ask for confirmation of any diagnoses, this is usually within a report from the appropriate professional. A copy of any such report should be kept with the child/young person's records.

If a child's difficulties are problematic to categorise in one of these areas the school should review its evidence in relation to the progress being made by the child and explore other possible factors contributing to the progress being less than expected.

The SEND Code of Practice, 2015 goes on to state that:

***“All pupils should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. The National Curriculum Inclusion Statement states that teachers should set high expectations for every pupil, whatever their prior attainment. Teachers should use appropriate assessment to set targets which are deliberately ambitious. Potential areas of difficulty should be identified and addressed at the outset. Lessons should be planned to address potential areas of difficulty and to remove barriers to pupil achievement. In many cases, such planning will mean that pupils with SEN and disabilities will be able to study the full national curriculum.”***

SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years, 2015, p94

In a school's response to pupils with SEN it should be noted that schools must:

- ***use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEN gets the support they need – this means doing everything they can to meet children and young people's SEN***
- ***ensure that children and young people with SEN engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils who do not have SEN***
- ***inform parents when they are making special educational provision for a child”***

SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years, 2015, p92