

SEND: GUIDANCE FOR COMMITTEE SCRUTINY

WHAT IS SEND?

The term SEND is used if a child or young person has a Special Educational Need and/or Disability; these can affect their:

- behaviour or ability to socialise, for example they struggle to make friends
- reading and writing, for example because they have dyslexia
- ability to understand things
- concentration levels, for example because they have ADHD
- physical ability

Children with SEND often need extra help or support, or special provision to allow them to have the same opportunities as other children of the same age. They may be eligible for SEN support (support given in school, such as speech therapy) or an education, health and care plan (EHCP), which is a plan of care for children and young people aged up to 25 who have more complex needs.

WHAT IS SEN SUPPORT?

Quality first teaching is the best way to meet a range of needs within the classroom. SEN Support is what schools and similar settings use to find and meet the needs of children with special educational needs (SEN). This support should be tailored to the needs of each, individual child. Education settings must make sure they meet the “reasonable” special educational needs of children. This means that all education settings should be able to meet the needs of most children with a learning disability.

If a child or young person has SEN, or an educational setting thinks that they might have SEN, the staff must follow this process:

- **Assess:** talk to a child’s parents or the young person themselves to work out what support might be needed.
- **Plan:** once a child or young person’s needs have been identified, staff must work together with them and their family to decide what outcomes they want the child or young person to achieve and what support should be put in place to help them achieve those outcomes.
- **Do:** the staff, supported by the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) where relevant, should put this support into practice.
- **Review:** the support received by the child or young person should be reviewed by everyone involved to see if it is working. If it is, it might continue. If it is not working, or if the outcomes have been achieved, some of the arrangements might be changed.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

Committees should hold school leaders to account for meeting their obligations in accordance with the [SEND Code of Practice \(2015\)](#); specifically chapter 6, and act as champions for vulnerable children and their needs, ensuring that all leaders are ambitious for pupils with SEND, and that their needs are effectively identified, assessed and met by the school.

Committee members should support schools to ensure pupils with SEND have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, classrooms and their peers throughout the school day and ensure that leaders develop and adapt the curriculum so that it is coherently sequenced to all pupils’ needs, starting points and aspirations.

Committees should receive and review an annual report on the school's provision for children with SEND and ensure that the school's arrangements for supporting these pupils are set out in an online policy.

FACT-FINDING: WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW?

- What do I understand about SEND, SEND provision and the school development priorities in this area?
- Do I know how the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) has contributed to curriculum development? How is the curriculum adapted to meet pupil needs? How are school leaders ambitious for pupils with SEND?
- How do teaching assistants and additional adults work with the class teachers to support learning and meet the needs of children with SEND?
- Is the school identifying SEND needs quickly and planning to meet needs effectively? How is this measured?
- Can the SENCo articulate the graduated response – from identifying needs, applying an 'Assess>Plan>Do>Review' cycle, to potentially liaising with external professionals? If needed, does the SENCO feel confident in applying to the LA for a statutory assessment? Which outside agencies work with the school to provide support? What is their impact?
- How well do leaders include pupils with SEND in all aspects of school life? Does the school's extra-curricular offer meet the needs of SEND pupils? If not, what steps have been/are being taken to address this?
- Does any remote learning provision meet the needs of all pupils and how are pupils supported in accessing remote learning? What is the school doing to ensure the SEND offer is as good as it can be for pupils unable to access in-school provision? How is this being quality-assured? (e.g. Book Looks, drop-ins, Parent/Pupil Voice?)
- How well are pupils with SEND prepared for their next steps? For example, in education, participating in society and being as healthy as possible in adult life.

DIGGING DEEPER: GUIDANCE FOR STRONGER SCRUTINY

- Additional scrutiny might be rendered by:
 - focusing on a particular aspect or emerging trend, such as a correlation between SEND pupils and poor attendance/behaviour/exclusions;
 - exploring whether there is an attainment/progress gap between SEND pupils and their peers;
 - examining how quickly and effectively SEND needs are being identified.*In all cases school leaders should be challenged to explain what is being done to address the issue identified.*
- Committees might challenge school leaders to demonstrate how the school's SEND provision has drawn on research and best practice examples from the region, the UK and internationally.
- Additional exploration might be undertaken on, for example:
 - understanding how interventions are quality assured;
 - understanding how the effective use of additional SEND funding and its impact is measured;
 - potential areas of weakness in the school's SEND provision and how they can be strengthened;
 - whether there have been any complaints around SEND provision from parents/carers and how they have been addressed.
- Committees might scrutinise how effectiveness is measured and look at how any key actions to improve leadership and/or provision, as identified by the SENCO, are being implemented.

- Committees might examine how effectively school leaders involve parents, carers and, as necessary, other professional/specialist services in deciding how best to support pupils with SEND; looking at parental opinion of SEND provision and the ways in which parents are able to contribute to SEND processes and reviews.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

<https://driveryouthtrust.com/>

<https://astreaacademytrust.org/inclusion-home/supporting-pupils-with-send/>