

Definitions of Special Educational Needs to support a needs assessment

Good practice for recording SEN Provision and Type

The SEND data as part of the School Census is a valuable resource to inform SENCOs, teachers and other colleagues about the pupils / students in their setting with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Discussions which have shaped this document have highlighted the following best practice:

- All teachers and support staff who work with the pupil should be made aware of their needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches which are required. This should be recorded on the school's information system (chapter 6.49 SEND CoP).
- The SEN Register is a 'live' document. Children and young people being placed on it are not placed there permanently as their needs for support may change.
- The SEN Register should be used to record those pupils' needs that are 'persistent' (i.e. needing involvement beyond the normal working practices).
- The SEN Policy and Information Reports should reflect how the SEND provision and type is decided upon and recorded within the education setting.
- Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including those with SEND. High quality teaching which is differentiated for individual pupils is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention cannot nor should not compensate for lack of good quality teaching.
- Parents, class teachers and SENCOs must be involved in the process of identifying pupils' SEND and in the planning and reviewing of the support which is put in place. Specialists may also be involved (Section 6.45, 6.48, 6.55 of SEND Code of Practice 2015). The SEND Code of Practice is clear that parents must be formally notified.
- Regularly (i.e. at least termly) reviewing the SEN Provision and Type of pupils. Making effective use of the School Census to inform what is done by the school. If parents give permission, SENCOs may want to maintain a 'monitoring list' of when pupils have SEN but are not receiving interventions, although the purpose of maintaining such a list may be questioned.
- Ensure enough time is given to review data in preparation for the census data submission deadlines.
- It may be beneficial for SEN Registers to clearly reflect the primary / broad area of need and the School Census codes.
- Children and young people may be placed on the SEND Register with or without diagnosis, however there should be clear evidence for why the additional support made available is needed, e.g. assessment results, notes from conversations with parents, etc.
- Children and young people receiving support through interventions should not automatically be placed on the SEND Register as not all interventions are for SEND, such as literacy booster groups.

Children and young people should only be placed on the SEND Register (provision and type) if they are receiving provision, not just because they have a diagnosis of a SEND.

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Broad Area of Need	Cognition and Learning (C&L)
Primary area of need code	SPLD - Specific Learning Difficulty
Description	<p>Pupils with specific learning difficulties have a particular difficulty in learning to read, write, spell or manipulate numbers and their performance in these areas may not be in line with their performance in other areas. Pupils may also have problems with short-term memory, with organisational skills and with co-ordination. Pupils with specific learning difficulties cover the whole ability range and the severity of their difficulty with learning may vary widely. Pupils should only be recorded as SpLD if their difficulties are significant and persistent, despite appropriate learning opportunities and if additional educational provision is being made to help them to access the curriculum.</p> <p>Specific learning difficulties include:</p> <p>Dyslexia Pupils with dyslexia have a marked and persistent difficulty in learning to read, write and spell. Pupils may have poor reading comprehension, handwriting and punctuation. They may also have difficulties in concentration and organisation and in remembering sequences of words. They may mispronounce common words or reverse letters and sounds in words.</p> <p>Dyscalculia Pupils with dyscalculia have difficulty in acquiring mathematical skills. Pupils may have difficulty understanding simple number concepts, lack an intuitive grasp of numbers and have problems learning number facts and procedures.</p> <p>Dyspraxia Pupils with dyspraxia are affected by an impairment or immaturity of the organisation of movement, often appearing clumsy. Gross and fine motor skills are hard to learn and difficult to retain and generalise. Pupils may have poor balance and co-ordination and may be hesitant in many actions (running, skipping, hopping, holding a pencil, doing jigsaws, etc). Their articulation may also be immature and their language late to develop. They may also have poor awareness of body position and poor social skills.</p>
What this looks like in school	Children with a SpLD will have a difficulty in one area, but are generally able in most others. This means that when looking at data, or reviewing work completed in books, there is a clear difficulty in only one aspect. When planning support for the child, it is important to focus only on the area of difficulty, not general learning.

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Broad Area of Need	Cognition and Learning (C&L)
Primary area of need code	MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty
Description	<p>Pupils with moderate learning difficulties will have attainments significantly below expected levels in most areas of the curriculum, despite appropriate interventions. Their needs will not be able to be met by normal differentiation and the flexibilities of the curriculum. Attainment in the core subjects will be significantly below chronological age expectations (at least three to four years behind their peers) – e.g. Teacher Assessment will be predominantly within the range pre key stage standards (PKS) 3 to 5 at Year 5. They should only be recorded as MLD if additional educational provision is being made to help them to access the curriculum. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties have much greater difficulty than their peers in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills and in understanding concepts. They may also have associated speech and language delay, low self-esteem, low levels of concentration and under-developed social skills.</p>
What this looks like in school	<p>Children with MLD are likely to be significantly behind in all areas. They will have difficulty being able to make expected progress and will require significantly more support from adults. They are likely to be using Bsqared to break learning down into smaller chunks and may need precision teaching methods and ‘overlearning’ to retain information. Depending on the quantity of provision being given, these children may have additional funding from the family of schools.</p>

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Broad Area of Need	Cognition and Learning (C&L)
Primary area of need code	SLD – Severe Learning Difficulty
Description	<p>Pupils with severe learning difficulties have significant intellectual or cognitive impairments. This has a major effect on their ability to participate in the school curriculum without support. They may also have difficulties in mobility and co-ordination, communication and perception and the acquisition of self-help skills. Pupils with severe learning difficulties will need support in all areas of the curriculum. They may also require teaching of self-help, independence and social skills. Some pupils may use sign and symbols but most will be able to hold simple conversations. They may have a life-long learning disability which requires a multi-disciplinary service response. These children and young people will have significant impairments which may include some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe learning difficulties • Autistic Spectrum Disorder • Significant difficulties with communication (expressive and/or receptive language) • Severe sensory impairment • Difficulties with appropriate social interaction and understanding • Associated challenging behaviour • Limited self-help skills and awareness of danger • Reliance on adults for activities and be travel dependent. <p>Their attainments may be within the pre key stage standards (PKS) 1 to 4 for much of their school careers (that is below level year 1 /KS1 of the National Curriculum).</p>
What this looks like in school	Children with SLD are likely to have a different curriculum to the rest of their cohort. They will require significant adult support. They are likely to be funded at a high level and would probably need an EHCP.

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Broad Area of Need	Cognition and Learning (C&L)
Primary area of need code	PMLD –Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty
Description	<p>Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have complex learning needs. In addition to very severe learning difficulties, pupils have other significant difficulties, such as physical disabilities, sensory impairment or a severe medical condition. Pupils require a high level of adult support, both for their learning needs and also for their personal care.</p> <p>They will have needs which may require a multi-disciplinary service response and their ability to make progress will be severely limited across all areas of development. These children and young people will have significant and multiple impairments which may include some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLD • PMLD • Severe ASD • Highly significant difficulties with communication (expressive and/or receptive language) • Complex sensory impairment <p>This may manifest itself in some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable difficulties with appropriate social interaction, communication and understanding. • Associated challenging behaviour. • Severely limited self-help skills. • Minimal awareness of danger • Predominantly dependent on adults for personal care skills. • Reliance on adults for activities and travel dependent. <p>They are likely to need sensory stimulation and a curriculum broken down into very small steps. Some pupils communicate by gesture, eye pointing or symbols, others by very simple language.</p> <p>Their attainment is likely to remain in the Engagement Model and not engage in subject specific learning. Progress will be assessed using the Engagement Model - below pre key stage standard (PKS) one throughout their school career</p> <p>Children in the nursery and EYFS age range will be functioning significantly below their chronological age in most areas of development. Reception aged children would typically be working in the birth to 12 month range of development in most areas. They may have an inconsistent developmental profile.</p>
What this looks like in school	Children with PMLD will have a different curriculum to the rest of their cohort. They will require significant adult support. They are likely to be funded at a high Family level or HLN level. They will require an EHCP and may require specialist provision.

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Broad Area of Need	Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
Primary area of need code	Social Emotional and Mental Health
Description	<p>‘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. These behaviours 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’.</p> <p>(Paragraph 6.32 SEND Code of Practice)</p> <p>SEMH needs may be long-term, but these may also be short-term and transitory.</p> <p>The ‘social’ aspect of SEMH refers to the relationships which the child has with others, and their skills in being able to establish, maintain and repair these relationships. It includes an awareness of and skill in demonstrating the behaviours which underpin these relationships.</p> <p>The ‘emotional’ aspect of SEMH refers to the awareness of and ability to self-regulate the emotions which sit alongside social behaviours.</p> <p>The ‘mental health’ aspect of SEMH is not simply the absence of mental illness but is a broader indicator of social, emotional and physical wellness. It is influenced by the wider contexts within which a child or young person lives.</p> <p>For schools and colleges, it is important to have a definition and ‘shared understanding’ that is easily understandable so that staff, pupils, students and parents can have discussions and plan interventions to meet SEMH needs. For the purposes of this guide, outcomes associated with SEMH will include stated wellbeing, children and young people’s happiness, life satisfaction and positive functioning. This relational approach to SEMH is significantly different from more traditional outcome measures described in terms of behavioural compliance.</p> <p>(Understanding Behaviour in Schools (Notts 2020))</p>
What this looks like in school	SEMH is a very broad category and incorporates many challenging behaviours. The skills and strategies employed will often be tailored directly to the needs of the child

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Broad Area of Need	Communication and Interaction (C&I)
Primary area of need code	SLCN - Speech, language and communication needs
Description	<p>Pupils with speech, language and communication needs cover the whole ability range.</p> <p>They should only be recorded as SLCN if additional educational provision is being made to help them to access the curriculum.</p> <p>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 if 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’ (Paragraph 6.28 SEND Code of Practice).</p> <p>SLCN can include the following difficulties with speech</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech which is difficult to understand, which might include difficulty in making different sounds • Problems discriminating between speech sounds, so ‘catch’ and ‘cat’ or ‘conscious’ and ‘conscience’ might sound the same • Stammering or stuttering where sounds or words are repeated or may be difficult to produce without effort • An unusual and persistently harsh or unusual voice quality • Difficulty using intonation to add to the meaning of what’s been said <p>SLCN can include the following difficulties with language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using sentence structures more appropriate for someone younger, for example, ‘me got them’ at four years of age • Problems linking sentences with words such as ‘and’, ‘but’, ‘so’, ‘then’ • Difficulty sequencing sentences to make a meaningful narrative such as explanations and stories • Problems learning new words • Difficulty finding the right words at the right time. This is also known as ‘word finding’ difficulties • Limited vocabulary for emotions, thoughts or feelings as these impact on the curriculum • Difficulty understanding complex sentences. For example, someone with SLCN might misunderstand the statement ‘the boy was kicked by the girl’ and think that the boy did the kicking • Difficulty understanding idioms such as ‘don’t hit the roof’

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	<p>SLCN can include the following difficulties with communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited eye contact• Poor turn taking and difficulty with starting and ending conversations• Problems getting the conversation back on track after two people have talked at once, or if there has been a misunderstanding between them• Difficulty understanding or responding to feedback from the listener. For example, not noticing when someone is bored or doesn't understand something• Difficulty staying on topic in conversation• Problems using language to negotiate in discussions or arguments <p>(Don't Get Me Wrong – The Communication Trust www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk)</p>
What this looks like in school	SLCN children should be accessing support from Speech and language therapy (SALT) practitioners. Many children require support from SALT in the early years and KS1 as part of their natural development. Only those requiring significant intervention or support would need to be on the SEND Register.

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Broad Area of Need	Communication and Interaction (C&I)
Primary area of need code	ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder
Description	<p>'Children and young people with ASD, including Asperger's Syndrome and Autism, 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' (Paragraph 6.29 SEND Code of Practice).</p> <p>Children and young people with ASD will typically be accessing provision which is in line with the recommendations of the Autism Education Trust (AET).</p>
What this looks like in school	ASD children cover a wide range of abilities and needs. The support required will be bespoke to the individual child. Many strategies relate to the classroom practice and should be embedded as part of our Quality First Teaching. Children with ASD should only be on the SEND Register if their learning is impacted or their needs are affecting their Social and emotional regulation and support is being put in place to help the child.

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Broad Area of Need	Sensory and Physical (S&P)
Primary area of need code	VI - Vision impairment
Description	<p>Visual impairment refers to a range of difficulties from minor impairment through to blindness. Pupils with visual impairments cover the whole ability range. For educational purposes, a pupil is considered to be visually impaired if they require adaptations to their environment or specific differentiation of learning materials in order to access the curriculum.</p> <p>Pupils should only be included if additional educational provision is being made to help them to access the curriculum. Pupils whose vision is corrected by spectacles should not be recorded as VI.</p> <p>Pupils who are blind or have very limited useful sight require tactile methods of learning, such as Braille and 3-D representations, together with making optimal use of their hearing. Partially sighted pupils also need differentiated materials and may use enlarged print or a mix of learning methods.</p>
What this looks like in school	VI support will be advised by medical professionals who are working with the child.

Broad Area of Need	Sensory and Physical (S&P)
Primary area of need code	HI - Hearing Impairment
Description	<p>Pupils with a hearing impairment range from those with a mild hearing loss to those who are profoundly deaf. They cover the whole ability range. For educational purposes, pupils are regarded as having a hearing impairment if they require hearing aids, adaptations to their environment and/or particular teaching strategies in order to access the concepts and language of the curriculum.</p> <p>Pupils should only be recorded as HI if additional educational provision is being made to help them to access the curriculum.</p> <p>A number of pupils with a hearing impairment also have an additional disability or learning difficulty.</p> <p>Hearing loss may be because of conductive or sensori-neural problems and can be measured on a decibel scale.</p>
What this looks like in school	HI support will be advised by medical professionals who are working with the child.

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Broad Area of Need	Sensory and Physical (S&P)
Primary area of need code	MSI – Multi-Sensory Impairment
Description	<p>Pupils with multi-sensory impairment have a combination of visual and hearing difficulties. They are sometimes referred to as deafblind but may have some residual sight and/or hearing. Many also have additional disabilities but their complex needs mean that it may be difficult to ascertain their intellectual abilities.</p> <p>Pupils should only be recorded as MSI if their sensory impairment is their greatest need.</p> <p>Pupils with multi-sensory impairment have much greater difficulties in accessing the curriculum and the environment than those with a single sensory impairment. They have difficulties in perception, communication and in the acquisition of information. Incidental learning is limited. The combination can result in high anxiety and multi-sensory deprivation. Pupils need teaching approaches which make good use of their residual hearing and vision, together with their other senses. They may need alternative means of communication.</p>
What this looks like in school	MSI support will be advised by medical professionals who are working with the child.

Broad Area of Need	Sensory and Physical (S&P)
Primary area of need code	Physical Disability
Description	Some children and young people with a physical disability (PD) require ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.
What this looks like in school	Disability support routines will notified to the school by the medical professionals who are working with the child.