



Ordinarily available SEND provision

Guidance on the provision that mainstream schools need to make for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities in Oxfordshire to support inclusive practice.



Foreword

Ordinarily available SEND provision aims to support schools and settings in Oxfordshire to identify, plan for and meet the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and require reasonable adjustments or additional provision at SEN support level.

In education, inclusive practice means designing and delivering learning experiences that accommodate the diverse needs of all students. This includes minimising or removing barriers to learning, ensuring accessibility, and promoting equality and diversity.

An inclusive setting is one that actively promotes participation and reduces the barriers that children and young people with SEND may experience while they are in their care.

All schools and settings should have a clear approach to early identification and a clear response to children and young people's SEND as part of their universal offer.

Ordinarily available SEND provision should be read alongside the [SEND Code of Practice 2015](#).



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1) Principles of inclusion

Every child or young person is entitled to:

- A good education that enables them to maximise opportunity and success in learning and life, irrespective of need, prior attainment, background or circumstance.
- Strong pathways into further education, training, employment and independent living.
- Successful and fulfilling participation in society, economic prosperity, good physical and mental health.
- Access to suitable, high-quality provision, which meets diverse need and diminishes barriers to participation and engagement.
- Equity of access and onward life chances; those who need something more or something different in order to realise this ambition do receive something more or something different.
- A rounded education with access to and benefiting from a breadth of experience and cultural capital.
- A strong commitment to early intervention and prevention to tackle, diminish or avert potential barriers to success.
- A strong commitment to partnership working which actively seeks and values the contributions of parent/carers and children and young people.
- Education in their local community wherever possible.
- Their special education needs being seen as a difference or neurodivergence rather than a shortcoming or weakness.
- Freedom to build, negotiate and maintain an extensive range of authentic relationships.

This guidance should be read alongside the [SEND Code of Practice 2015](#) which defines SEND (page 15-16) and sets out the following responsibilities:

Local authority responsibilities

Make arrangements for the statutory assessment of pupils and maintain and review statements of SEND and Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans.

Maintain an overview of the extent that education settings are accessible for pupils with SEND.

Publish information on SEND funding and provision.

Ensure sufficiency of provision for pupils with SEND and keep under constant review.

Monitor the progress of children and young people with SEND and work with early years providers and schools to resolve issues regarding the progress of children and young people with SEND, wherever they are educated.

Co-produce provision and policy with families of children with SEND and with children and young people with SEND.

Provide information, advice and support to parents of children and young people with SEND and young people themselves, including the provision of a statutory information, advice and support service (SENDIASS) along with mediation and resolution services, and the local offer.

Prepare and maintain an accessibility strategy to

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
- improve the physical environment of the schools for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the schools
- improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

Governors, early years providers, schools and colleges¹ responsibilities



Aim to meet the range of children and young people's needs in their locality as far as is appropriate.

Work with families of children and young people with SEND and the children and young people themselves to shape provision and policy.

Review and analyse information on SEND funding and provision and monitor expenditure.

Maintain a record of pupils with identified SEND.

Ensure that staff have the requisite skills, training and understanding to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

Identify children and young people with SEND and ensure provision is made in line with the SEND Code of Practice 2015 and complying with the Children and Families Act 2014.

Publish a SEND information report, a SEND policy and an accessibility plan on the school website.

Appoint a SEND governor (schools: statutory, early years settings recommended) and SEND coordinator.

Ensure SEND provision is integrated into the organisational improvement or development plan.

Keep arrangements for prospective and current pupils with a disability under constant review.

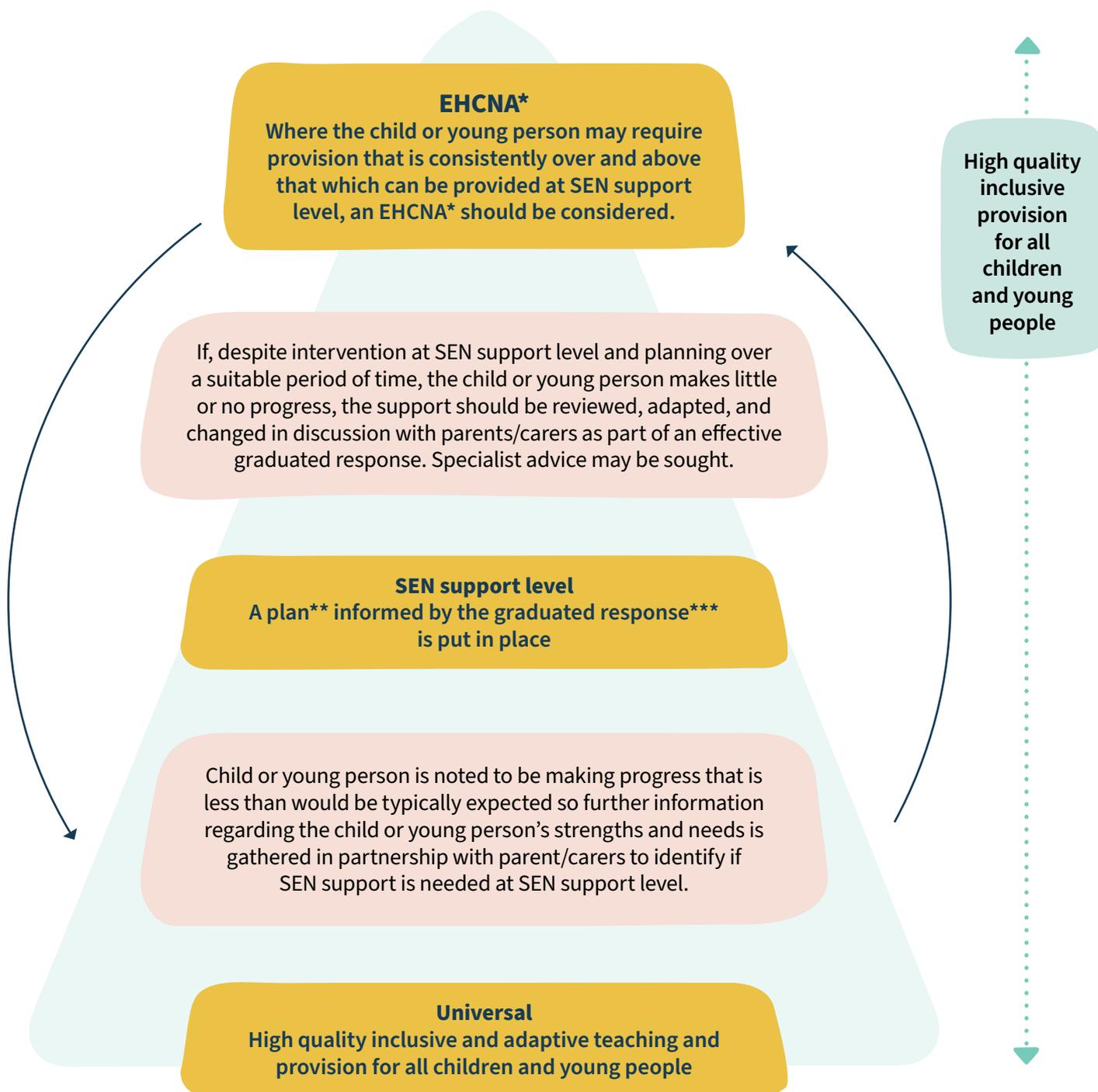
Monitor the progress of children and young people with SEND to ensure the provision specified in EHC plans is in place and the child or young person is making progress.



¹6.79 to 6.83 [SEND Code of Practice 2015](#)

2) High quality, inclusive teaching and learning

High quality teaching is effective for all children. All teachers are teachers of children and young people with SEND.



* Education health and care needs assessment

** Examples include a pupil profile/pupil passport/All about me/SEN support plan etc.

*** See graduated response programme diagram in section 9

Statutory EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The EYFS states: All children deserve high quality early education and care (1.19) and highlights that play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals, and solve problems.

Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play and learning that is guided by adults. Practitioners need to decide what they want children in their setting to learn, and the most effective ways to teach it. Practitioners must stimulate children's interests, responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning (1.16).

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.

Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things (1.18).

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) guidance report [Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools](#) states that supporting children and young people with SEND should be part of a proactive approach to supporting all pupils, not an ‘add-on’.

It sets out five key strategies aimed at supporting pupils with SEND.

- 1.** Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils without exception
- 2.** Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs
- 3.** Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching
- 4.** Complement high quality teaching with carefully selected small group and one-to-one interventions
- 5.** [Work effectively with teaching assistants](#)

Research from the EEF identifies [five specific approaches](#) (the ‘five-a-day’ principle) which teachers can integrate daily into their practice to support learning and improve outcomes for all children and young people, including those with SEND. Teachers should use these as a starting point for classroom teaching for all children and young people, including those with SEND.

The five approaches are:

- Explicit instruction
- Cognitive and [metacognitive strategies](#)
- Utilising [scaffolding](#)
- Flexible grouping
- [Using technology](#)

Many of the strategies included in this document form part of high-quality teaching and learning approaches. High-quality teaching considers the barriers to learning and how these can be overcome.

Although not exhaustive, the following are key features of high-quality, inclusive teaching and provision:

1. Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils without exception

- High expectations of all children and young people asking the question ‘what is it that I/we need to do differently in order to help this child or young person access the learning and achieve success?’
- Staff understanding special education needs as a difference or neurodivergence rather than a shortcoming or weakness.
- Use of language and terminology that doesn’t have negative connotations or suggest a ‘deficit’.
- Ensuring child’s wellbeing needs are met so that they are in ‘the right place’ emotionally to learn.
- Fostering independence and positive relationships.
- Strong, positive relationships within the learning environment.
- A physical environment which is conducive to learning, taking into account such aspects as sensory needs.
- Effective, skilled learning environment management.

2. Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs

- Setting staff knowing the needs and contexts of children and young people and the characteristics of learners with such contexts, whilst not stereotyping or applying a label in a way which might have a negative impact on expectations or opportunities.
- On-going, responsive, diagnostic assessment, observation, monitoring and review that informs and shapes the teaching and learning.
- Use of a wide range of observation, assessment, and feedback tools including self and peer assessment.
- Skilled pedagogical intervention; using knowledge of how children and young people learn to craft and re-shape learning experiences.

3. Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching

- Access to a broad curriculum and to learning which is sequential, cohesive, relevant and contextualised.
- Skilled, open-ended and hinge questioning; asking the right questions at the right time .
- Modelling to reveal the thought processes of an 'expert' learner to aid understanding and help develop metacognitive skills.
- Dedicated teaching of metacognitive skills; helping children and young people to understand how they learn and to make decisions about learning, in order to problem-solve and select the most effective learning strategies for different tasks/contexts.
- Building on prior knowledge, understanding, skills and ideas which children and young people bring to new and subsequent learning opportunities and experiences.
- Embedding key skills and understandings to gain fluency and mastery across different contexts of learning.
- Opportunities to elaborate on learning; to use describing and explaining which helps integrate new information with prior knowledge and embed it in memory.
- Planned sequences and cycles of learning which facilitate mastery.
- Flexibility in teaching and learning to adjust and personalise in response to children and young people, while ensuring that any long-term and generic adaptation is always available, practised routinely and part of everyday adjustment if needed.
- The explicit teaching of key vocabulary or modelling with intent, to assist in conceptual understanding and building knowledge.
- A range of resources and strategies are evident in planning and delivery - visual aids, concrete and visual resources, hands-on and experiential opportunities, use of symbols, pictures and colour, use of memory aids, visual stimuli, songs and rhymes, etc.

- Explicit teaching of how to use different resources to support learning.
- Appropriate use of modern technology such as programmes designed for problem-solving and open-ended learning for children and young people as well as resources to support teaching such as interactive boards and learning platforms.

4. Complement high quality teaching with carefully selected small group and one-to-one interventions.

5. Work effectively with teaching assistants

- Skilled deployment of any additional adults with appropriate training and clear, focused remit to support learning, independence, metacognition and self-regulation.
- The impact of any adjustments, personalisation, intervention or support critically evaluated, with these evaluations used to inform subsequent teaching and learning.
- Pre-teaching which acknowledges the different starting points of children and young people and attempts to enable all children and young people to access the core teaching and learning from the main lesson(s).



3) Identification of SEND

It is a national expectation that all schools and settings have a clear, defined approach to identifying and responding to SEND; good practice would be to use a strengths and needs approach. For further information about an effective approach to early identification of SEND see the [SEND Code of Practice 2015](#) or the [Early Years Guide to the SEND Code of Practice](#).

If, for example, despite consistently high-quality teaching, a child or a young person experiences difficulties in accessing the same learning as their peers of a broadly similar age or needs much greater support in self-regulation than peers, or is not as 'emotionally healthy', there may be an underlying need.

In deciding whether to make special educational provision at SEN support level, the special educational needs coordinator (SENDCO) in discussion with teacher(s), the child or young person and their family, should consider all the information gathered about the child or young person's progress. This will help to determine the support that is needed and whether it can be provided by adapting the setting's core (universal) offer or whether something 'different or additional' is required.

Good practice is to reflect on the impact of strategies and support already in place as part of high-quality inclusive teaching and learning, to consider what else might be beneficial by asking 'how do I need to change my teaching or my approach, how might I change the provision or environment/ resources?', rather than describing how the child or young person needs to change.

Other questions that a school or setting may wish to consider include:

- How might the classroom/setting environment/layout be changed to better accommodate the needs of all?
- How might additional resources such as visual representations make learning more accessible to all?
- Is the deployment of additional adults effective? Have they had the training they need to enhance learning whilst nurturing the independence of the child or young person?
- Is assessment effective and leading to an accurate understanding of need, both educational and wider outcomes?
- Is there consistent, universal high-quality teaching and learning?
- How good are the relationships between adults and the children and young people?
- Are there other factors impacting on the child or young person's development that may need support?
- Would the family benefit from use of a Strengths and Needs form? <https://www.oscb.org.uk/early-help-forms-tools/>
- Does information from parents/carers, early years practitioners, school/setting assessments, health, education or social care professionals indicate that a child or young person's developmental progress is slower and outside the typical range that would be expected for other children or young people of the same age?

The SEND Indicators Tool can support this practice.

4) SEN support²

If assessments and other information gathered indicate that a child or young person needs provision beyond universal high-quality teaching, the next level is SEN support.

This guidance focuses on SEN support, which is broadly the adaptations, adjustments and additionality that should be ordinarily available within every mainstream school to support children and young people with SEND.

There is delegated funding for primary and secondary mainstream schools for SEND. The national expectation that up to £6,000 of additional provision can be made, for those who need it, each year. This funding can be used flexibly by a school to develop provision which benefits a wide group of students, for example a nurture hub.

For children in nursery classes and early years settings there is funding available on a case-by-case basis for children with low level and/or emerging needs and children with more complex high-level needs. Nursery classes and early years settings are not expected to pay the first £6,000 for any additional SEND provision and can claim up to the child's full educational entitlement in line with their needs.

For further information on Early Education funding for children with SEND go to:

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/children-education-and-families/information-parents/find-childcare/help-paying-childcare/funding-children-send

and

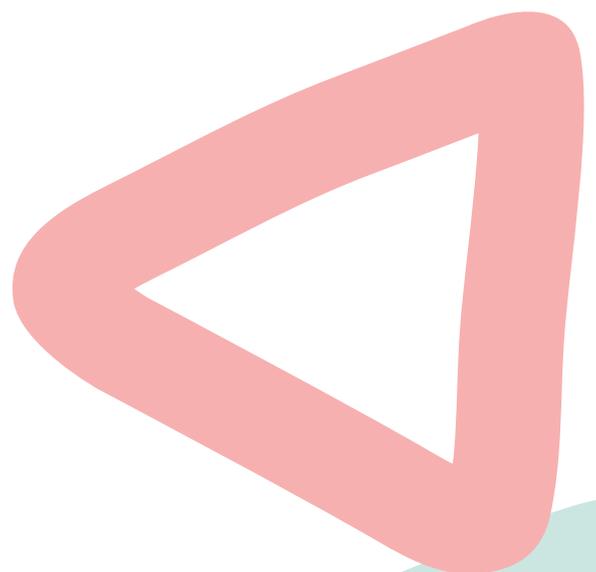
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/information-providers/childrens-services-providers/sen-support-providers/guidance-and-procedures

5) Education, health and care plans³

The vast majority of children will have their needs appropriately met using the approaches and strategies set out in this document at a SEN support level.

Only those with the most exceptional level of needs will require a statutory assessment of their SEND and provision to be made in accordance with an EHC Plan in order to meet needs.

There is an expectation that the school will have already tried to meet the child or young person's needs through universal high-quality teaching and through the adjustments and/or additionality provision at SEN support level, using a graduated response, over a suitable period of time before requesting an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA).



² Please refer to inclusive support series for more detail

6) Working with parents⁴

Parent/carers know their children in different situations, with different people and across a range of contexts and environments. Their views and insights are invaluable to the identification/assess/plan/do/review process.

Parent/carers must be and feel involved in processes and empowered to support their child or young person's needs. There needs to be acknowledgement from all that a child or young person and the perceptions of a child or young person's needs may be very different in different contexts but that each context is of equal importance.

Sometimes parent/carers will feel anxious about their child's needs and/or about how their child is perceived by their peers or teachers. Working proactively in partnership with parent/carers to listen and to engage in joint problem-solving/decision-making is effective practice, which benefits the child or young person, family and wider school community.

At times, parent/carers, early years practitioners/teachers and others may have differing views about how a child or young person's needs are best met and indeed whether those needs are additional and may be identified as SEND. These different perspectives can be very helpful in gaining a full understanding of a child or young person's needs, strengths and behaviours, and of the various support strategies that may be helpful to them. Sometimes discussions can be challenging. Being child-centred, flexible, strengths-based and solution-focused is key to any discussion, challenging or otherwise, that parents/carers and schools may have with each other.

7) Voice of the child or young person

Children and young people need to be empowered to express their views and feelings.

Consideration needs to be given to how these are meaningfully gathered on an individual basis, for example an early years children or non verbal child's views can and should still be gathered via observation and talking to parents. These should be given due weight according to age, maturity and capability.

Most children and young person will find it easier to think about the present rather than far into the future. In early years it is important to observe the child and communicate with parents/carers in order to capture the views of the child, the child's interests and strengths and what adjustments assist them to learn and develop. As they grow older, wherever possible ask the child or young person about what they enjoy, what they feel they are good at and anything they find harder, what helps them to learn, what is going well and what could be better. Their answers will be the building blocks for gathering their views for more formal purposes. We need to ask children and young people about how they want to be involved and to give their views, offering flexible options as far as possible.

Managers of early years settings and headteachers will want to think about how to ensure the views of children or young people are an integral part of the school/setting's overall culture. They should ensure that children and young people with SEND are involved in planning and decision-making on the support they receive for needs. It is vital to gain the child or young person's viewpoint and perspective of their lived experiences.

³ Please refer to Guidance on '[Requesting an EHC needs assessment](#)' for more detail

⁴ Please refer to SENDIASS guidance

8) Early years settings and school-based roles and responsibilities

Although there are some specific role related responsibilities, meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND is everyone's responsibility.

Governors

responsibilities
/early years
committees

Publication of SEND information (including the SEND information report) on the setting/school website about the implementation of their policy for children and young people with SEND.

It is expected that governors /early years committees regularly receive a range of information specific to the SEND cohort in their setting/school. As well as progress and attainment, this should highlight indicators such as attendance rates, including persistent absenteeism. Use of reduced hours provision (part-time timetables), exclusions and violent incidents should also be reported to governors/early years committees for various groups of children and young people, including those with SEND, so that a more rounded picture of inclusivity, effectiveness of provision and impact can be gained.

Ensuring adherence to the SEND code of practice and should promotion of best practice in SEND.

Strategic monitoring and evaluating of budgetary decisions, the quality of provision and the broad educational outcomes for those with SEND.



Headteachers/early years managers/supervisors

responsibilities

Has overall strategic oversight of the effective and consistent implementation of the SEND policy across the school. This will include ensuring frontline practitioners are appropriately trained and skilled to meet the range of need within the setting/ school.

Leads on the culture within a setting/school; set the standard, modelling the expectation of inclusivity and meeting the needs of all children and young people. In good schools/ settings headteachers/early years managers/supervisors are the champions of all children and young people; good settings/schools are good for all children and young people.

Alongside early years committees/governors, ensure that SEND provision at a strategic level is monitored and evaluated routinely, within the school/setting's overall quality assurance framework. This should focus on the impact of SEND provision on outcomes and be used to inform subsequent policy, procedure and practice, including the identification of any areas for improvement.



SENDCOs responsibilities

Model inclusivity and best practice in teaching, curricular provision, the environment and resources, to support strong outcomes.

Settings must have arrangements in place to support children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND).



The SEND code of practice states that group settings such as pre-schools and day nurseries are expected to identify a SENDCO, and childminders are encouraged to identify a person to act as SENDCO.

In schools (including maintained nursery schools) the SENDCO must be a qualified teacher working at the school and should be part of the senior leadership team.

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Provides leadership and professional guidance to colleagues.

Ensure all staff are aware of children and young people's individual needs and provision, that there is good, frequent liaison with parent/carers, that the package of support is cohesive and understood by all.

Keep up to date with SEND-related research and policy, updating parents and colleagues and informing policy and practice.

Lead early years practitioners/teachers responsibilities

Deliver universal, high-quality teaching for all.

Meet the needs of all children in their setting/class.

Have oversight of any additional adults working with the class.



Know which children and young people in their class has SEND, the nature and level of that SEND and the current plan to support the children and young people's needs.

Have high aspirations for and expectations of children and young people with SEND.

Leader of provision for SEND at the point of delivery in the classroom.

Tailor provision to meet need, with expertise and guidance from the SENDCO as and when appropriate.

Identify and effectively use resources to provide the adjustments and adaptations a children or young person may require.

Early years support worker/ practitioner/teaching assistants

responsibilities

Support the child or young person to be as independent in their learning as possible.

Under the direction of the early years lead practitioner/class teacher, deliver short, intensive spells of one to one or small group interventions.

In early years settings, the early years practitioner, usually the child's key person, remains responsible for working with the child on a daily basis. With support from the SENDCO, they should oversee the implementation of the interventions or programmes agreed as part of SEN support. The SENDCO should support the practitioner in assessing the child's response to the action taken, problem solving and advising on the effective implementation of support. (SEND Code of Practice 2015).

Do not replace the teacher for a child or young person with SEND but enhance the teaching, with the child or young person continuing to retain direct access to the high-quality teaching of the most qualified and lead professional in the classroom.

Peers

responsibilities

A key part of an inclusive culture providing support to each other in learning and development.

9) The graduated response also known as assess-plan-do-review⁵

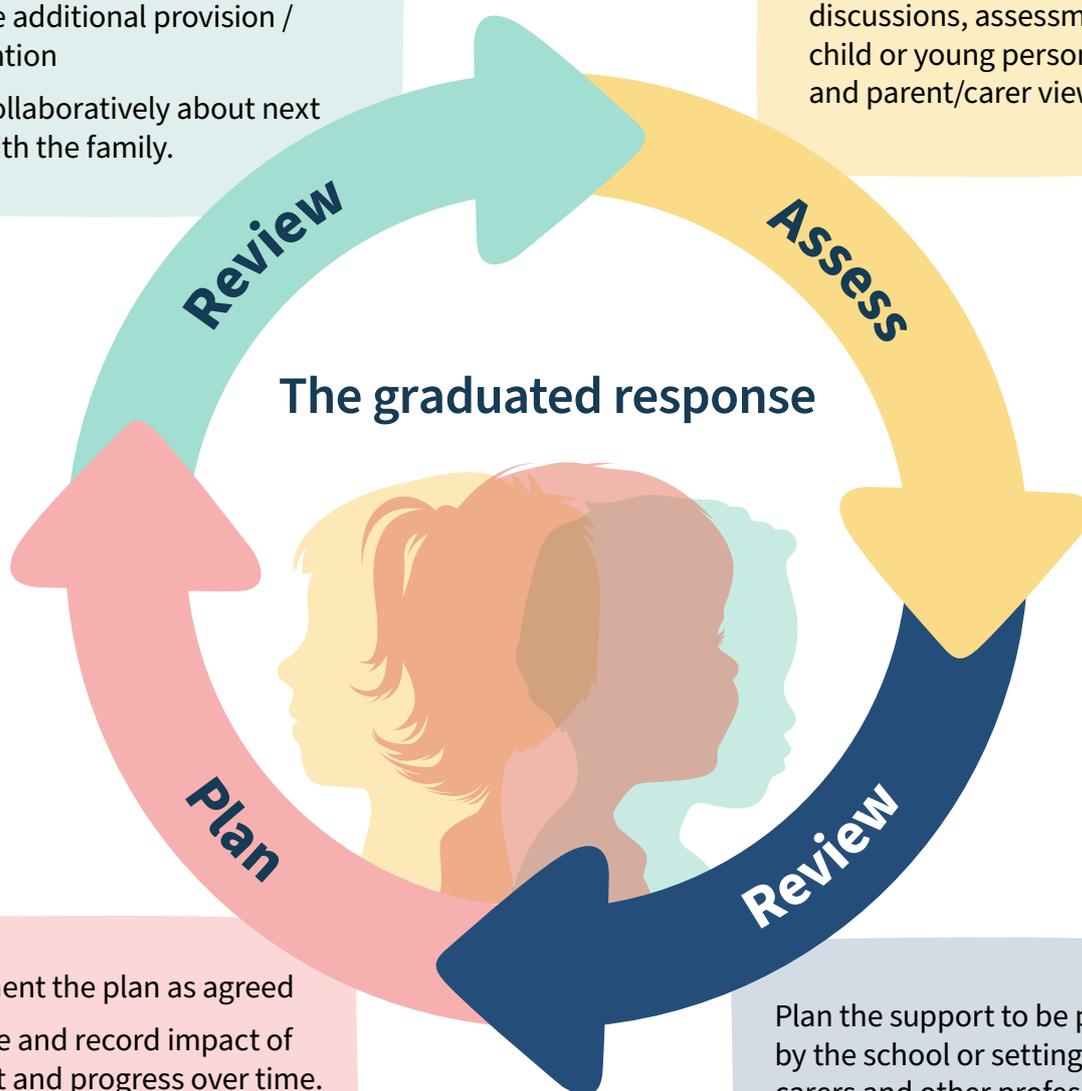
Regularly discuss whether the support is making a difference and if the plan needs to change.

Discuss how effective the additional provision has been and the impact on the child or young person.

Review assessments before & after the additional provision / intervention

Think collaboratively about next steps with the family.

Work out the strengths and needs of the child or young person and specifically what they need help and support with through observations, discussions, assessments, child or young person's views and parent/carer views.



Implement the plan as agreed
Observe and record impact of support and progress over time.
Link additional intervention / support into everyday learning.

Plan the support to be provided by the school or setting, parents/ carers and other professionals.
Create SMART outcomes in partnership with parents/carers.
Outline support needed using a provision map or timetable of support.

From the SEND code of practice, schools and settings must:

- Identify children and young people who are not making progress in learning in learning
- Assess the needs of children and young people, including any special educational need
- Plan and deliver provision to help children and young people overcome their difficulties
- Review the provision to understand if adjustments and support have helped or are helping the children and young people to overcome difficulties
- Involve parent/carers and children and young people in planning and reviewing any adjustments or support that is put in place; securing parent/carer and children and young people input throughout the assess/plan/do/review process.

Parents/carers must be informed of any special educational provision being implemented to meet their child or young person’s needs. Parents should be actively involved and informed throughout the whole process of planning to meet the individual child’s SEN.

The school/early years setting should use the SEND Indicators Tool, Oxfordshire’s ordinarily available SEND provision, information on the SEND framework and the guidance and procedures pages to inform identification and planning of suitable provision and support for children and young people.

It is good practice to review the indicators for all relevant areas of need to make sure that support is tailored appropriately.

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(i) Assess

A clear analysis of the child or young person’s strengths and needs should be undertaken; Learning gaps may not always be an indication of a special educational need but identifying and addressing them is still important. This assessment should include progress and attainment over time and other information from the school/setting’s core systems for monitoring and tracking such as information on attitudes and behaviours. Historic information, such as prior attainment, is important in shaping a picture. Observation and assessments also need to monitor the impact of any previous interventions or actions using comparisons to age-related

expectations and other data sets. Assessments will often need to go beyond that which is ‘academic’ or can be defined in age-related terms.

The early help strengths and needs form can be used to identify if there are other factors impacting on the child or young person’s development that may need support. Strengths & Needs and Early Help Tools - Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (oscb.org.uk)

(ii) Plan

Following on from assessment, if required an individualised support plan should be developed with clearly defined actions, goals, timescales and arrangements for review/subsequent assessment.

The support plan should be a dynamic document that informs what happens in the classroom. All school staff working with the child or young person should use the support plan to guide the teaching and provision for the child or young person.

A robust SEN support plan:

- Accurately reflects the needs of the child or young person.
- Enables everyone involved in supporting the child or young person to have a clear understanding of the support that will be put in place and why.
- Supports effective information sharing (including at key points of transition).
- Informs the staff working with the child or young person of specific outcomes (targets/goals) that have been agreed and how these will be reached.
- Evidences the assess, plan, do, review cycle - the identification of need, what has been tried so far, and the impact of any additional support.
- Allows school/setting staff to plan for progression, monitor the effectiveness of

teaching and learning strategies and monitor the provision for additional support needs within the school/setting.

- Supports the child or young person to become more involved in their own learning and take ownership of their targets/goals.
- Helps families to understand how their child or young person will be supported at the school/setting and how they can help them at home.
- Provides evidence for funding applications and referrals to external support services, if required.
- Evidences the graduated response prior to a statutory needs assessment request, if appropriate.
- Includes planning and preparing for transition where a child or young person moves into another phase/class, setting/school. The current setting/school should agree with parents/carers the information to be shared with the new setting/school as part of this planning process. (SEND Code of Practice 2015).

Oxfordshire has a comprehensive early years transition pack for practitioners which provides lots of helpful information and templates: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/information-providers/childrens-services-providers/support-early-years-providers/transition-pack

(iii) Do

Continued direct access to high-quality teaching is critical, focusing on the adjustments and/or additionality which enable the child or young person to continue to access learning through the lead professional(s) for that class.

In implementing the plan, evidence-based interventions should be provided if appropriate, personalised planning should link any intervention to classroom/setting practice, and the school/setting should make full use of available resources.

The SENDCO's role is one of expert adviser and of helping to find solutions to ensure the child or young

person's needs are met effectively. They should also ensure that once a plan is in place, it will be implemented consistently and given time to have effect. This might include checking in with the child or young person to monitor and make adjustments as required, in collaboration with others.

Section 11 offers a range of strategies, adaptations, differentiation and personalisation designed to assist schools with devising the 'do' element of the cycle, according to needs.

(iv) Review

An important part of the cycle is the review of the impact/effectiveness of the support plan. Reviews should be structured and focused and held at least three times a year.

As for other parts of the process, collaboration between the school/setting, parents/carers and child or young person, as well as other partners if appropriate, is key to an effective review, establishing a shared, accurate understanding of the impact of support, intervention, adjustments and additional provision.

Everyone who is involved in the process should decide together:

- Whether the SEN support is having a positive impact
- Whether the outcomes have been, or are being, achieved
- Whether new outcomes need to be identified
- Whether support needs to continue or different support needs to be tried

This specific review stage does not replace the need for on-going, formative and responsive assessment in real-time.

Where a child or young person continues to make less than expected progress, despite evidence-based support and interventions that are matched to their area(s) of need, practitioners should consider involving appropriate specialists.

This could be health visitors, speech and language therapists, or specialist advisory teachers/support workers, who will be able to help identify effective strategies, equipment, programmes or other interventions to enable the child to make progress towards the desired learning and development outcomes. The decision to involve specialists should be taken with the child or young person's parents.

For early years settings, referrals to the early years SEND team, integrated therapy team (physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy) and SENSS physical disability team should be via the single point of request for involvement (SPORFI) with parental consent. [Help from support services | Oxfordshire County Council](#).

A school's graduated response should be clearly and accessibly set out in their SEND information report, which must be reviewed and updated annually and published on its website.

[Oxfordshire County Council](#) and [Oxfordshire schools](#) have examples and templates to help gather and record information and work with parents/carers to plan outcomes and review progress for children and young people with SEND.

10) The four broad areas of need⁶

(i) Communication and interaction

- includes children on the autism spectrum (ASC) or with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and all children and young people who have difficulty in communicating with others. This could either be because they have difficulty saying what they want, understanding what is being said to them, or they do not understand the social rules of communication.

Children and young people with 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.

(ii) Cognition and learning

- includes learning difficulties where children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers even with appropriate support.

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 associated difficulties with mobility and communication
- **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)** which affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, and developmental co-ordination disorder.



⁶ Please refer to 6.28 to 6.35 of the [SEND Code of Practice 2015](#) for more detail

(iii) Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH)

- includes 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-harm, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained.

Other children and young people may have disorders such as ADHD-HI hyperactive/impulsive type, ADHD-I inattentive/distractable type or ADHD-C combined type or attachment disorder. Behaviours should be explored as communication and could be a result of an unidentified/unmet communication and interaction or learning need.

(iv) Sensory and/or physical

- 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. These difficulties may fluctuate over time.

Many children and young people with vision impairment (VI), hearing loss/deafness (HL) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) will require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning, or habilitation support.

Children and young people with an MSI have a combination of permanent vision and hearing difficulties. Some children and young people with a physical disability (PD) require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

These areas give an overview of the range of needs that schools and settings should plan for, however, the profile for every child or young person will be different and individual children or young people can have needs across all these areas and their needs may change over time.

For instance, speech, language and communication needs can also be a feature of a number of other areas of SEND, and children with autism may have needs across all areas.

Please look at all relevant sections to make sure that the support is tailored appropriately.

As per the Education Endowment Foundation guidance report Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools staff should

“Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs” so that the special educational provision made for a child or young person is always based on an understanding of their particular strengths and needs and seeks to address any difficulties. It’s important to identify difficulties early to ensure needs are addressed and children or young people are supported in these key areas as soon as possible.

Some learners will have had their needs identified at an early age and may already have received support. For others, needs may not become apparent until the child enters a group setting or difficulties begin to impact on the child’s learning and wellbeing.

11) SEN support strategies by category of need

This section clarifies the expectations of special educational provision that mainstream schools and settings can make via SEN support. Not all settings and schools will make these arrangements all the time but can reasonably do so when required. For commonly occurring difficulties, schools need to be mindful of their anticipatory duties.

While all the strategies are considered provision that should be ordinarily available in a setting or school, the intensity, quantity and frequency that the strategies and provisions are implemented for a child or young person may well vary within the graduated response.

(i) Communication and interaction needs

Communication and interaction needs (C&I) Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) cover the whole ability range. They find it more difficult to communicate with others.

They may have difficulties with:

- fluency
- forming sounds, words or sentences (expressive language) that impacts upon their ability to produce spoken or written language
- understanding language that they hear or read (receptive language)
- understanding, using and/or remembering words that they want to use

They may have a combination of these needs.

Learners on the autism spectrum cover the whole ability range. It is called a spectrum condition as it affects everyone differently.



Although no two children or young people with autism are the same, individuals may have differences in the following key areas:

- **Interacting** – differences in understanding social behaviour and the thoughts and feelings of others, which impacts on the development of relationships and friendships.
- **Communication** – differences in expressing, understanding and processing language. Good verbal language skills may mask a deeper level of misunderstanding.
- **Processing information** – differences in planning, organisation, predicting, managing transitions and generalising skills.
- **Emotional regulation** – some children or young people will need to be taught specific strategies to help them to manage strong feelings.
- **Autistic children or young people will often have a passionate interest in a chosen topic** – this can be a source of reassurance for them.
- **Sensory processing** – differences in perceiving sensory information. Hypo (low sensitivity) or hyper (high sensitivity) of touch, sight, hearing, smell, taste, vestibular inner ear (balance) and proprioceptive (body awareness) can cause distress or discomfort.
- Children and young people need help to acquire language skills in order to develop their thinking as well as their ability to communicate.

Communication and interaction needs (C&I) strategies

Social communication and interaction

- Provide opportunities throughout the day to facilitate joint attention
[May I Join You ? - English - You Tube](#)
- Prioritise responsive interactions by following the child's lead www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/information-childcare-providers/Allowingthetchildtotakethelead.pdf
- Use activities such as copy box to develop and extend shared attention in play www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/information-childcare-providers/Copybox.pdf
- Provide opportunities to engage in 'cause and effect' games to enable understanding of how things can happen www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/childreducationandfamilies/informationforchildcareproviders/goodpractice/sentoolkit/Causeandeffect.pdf
- Offer activities that encourage learning through play, e.g. imitating/mirroring activities, 'join in' activities and songs
- Reduce social demands to only demands that the child or young person is able to cope with
- Give opportunities for supported play with peers during both indoor and outdoor environments. Explicitly practice turn taking by modelling turn taking language to support communication development www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/information-childcare-providers/Takingturns.pdf
- Use individual or small group work to focus on specific communication and interaction skills. www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/childreducationandfamilies/informationforchildcareproviders/goodpractice/sentoolkit/Smallgrouptimes.pdf
- Give support to respond to conflict and resolve difficult situations
- Use social stories to support the child's understanding of social situations
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/information-childcare-providers-sentoolkit/socialstories.pdf
www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/childreducationandfamilies/educationandlearning/specialeducationalneeds/SocialStories_biting.pdf
- Display social rules and explicitly refer to them
- Provide opportunities to interact with different peers and adults in a range of contexts for example, in various lunchtime clubs
- Explicitly teach about facial expression and body language as a form of communication
- Support and scaffold non-structured times, including breaks and lunchtimes
- Use personal interests to motivate and develop social learning
- Role play social scenarios, and practice social scripts
- Support group work and clarify what the role of each learner is. Include communication role models in the groups
- Consider seating arrangements to support both collaboration and independent working
- Use visual approaches to support the development of social understanding, for example, social stories, comic strip conversations

Spoken and expressive language

- Provide a language rich environment that supports and encourages all children to have opportunities to express themselves
- Repeat back what the child has said so that they hear a clear model. Avoid correcting the child if the word(s) are mispronounced
- Reduce the demands on the child to communicate verbally by modelling and supporting the child to find other ways to share their message through non-verbal means such as gesture, signing, visual supports (objects or reference, photographs or symbols). Signing training videos to support this available from Oxford Health:
[Signing training - video 1 - YouTube](#)
[Signing training - video 2 - YouTube](#)
- www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/early-years-childcare/signingbooklet.pdf
- Teach children to recognise and use visual prompts to engage them in making choices, e.g. objects of reference, photos, symbols
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/information-childcare-providers-sentoolkit/choices.pdf
- Use descriptive commentary to support the child's expressive language skills during play www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/information-childcare-providers/Descriptivecommentary.pdf
- When communicating with the child, match the number of words they are saying and where appropriate add one more. For example, the child says 'car' adult responds 'yes blue car/ big car or fast car' www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/childreducationandfamilies/informationforchildcareproviders/goodpractice/sentoolkit/Matchone.pdf
- Create structured opportunities to engage in communication skills, such as asking another child for some fruit at snack time
- Involve good peer role models and buddies, e.g. for language modelling and to help the child use learned skills in the everyday environment
- Provide opportunities for guided reading to support language development, comprehension, and inference
- Plan activities to practice language that can be predictable, e.g. circle time, news, group time
- Give time for the child and young person to find the words they want to say
- Repeat sentences back to either expand the complexity or length, to add a different vocabulary word or to model the correct grammar
- Comment and give choices to encourage talking. Ask questions that are open-ended

Understanding and processing

- Help to make the day as predictable as possible by using consistent routines/structure language and expectations www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/information-childcare-providers/visualtimetable.pdf
www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/childreducationandfamilies/informationforchildcareproviders/goodpractice/sentoolkit/Sequencing.pdf
- Provide instructions one step at a time and check or observe that the child has understood
- Allow time for a child to process and respond, which could be for up to 10 seconds. Slow down your response to encourage them to do the same
- Modify the language that adults use; reduce, slow down, give take up time
- Use descriptive commentary to support a child's understanding of language and extend their play www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/information-childcare-providers/Descriptivecommentary.pdf
- Explain changes to events or routines and support with visual prompts
- Use signing to support children's receptive language development. There are two training videos to support this available from Oxford Health
 - [Signing training - video 1 - YouTube](#)
 - [Signing training - video 2 - YouTube](#)
 - www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/early-years-childcare/signingbooklet.pdf
- Support oral information visually, e.g. pictures, symbols, gestures, lists, video clips
- Reduce and chunk language to avoid information overload
- Pre-teach and reinforce new vocabulary when new concepts or units of work are introduced
- Support predictability, transitions and changes to routines with visual timetables and a 'now and next' approach
- Explicitly explain non-routine events and changes to the usual
- Check understanding by asking open questions or by seeking feedback
- Use supports such as task plans, sequence boards, word-banks, glossaries to alleviate load on auditory memory and organisation of information
- Avoid the use of sarcasm and idioms
- Consider the use of non-literal language with care



Attention and listening skills

- Use the child's name to focus attention individually before giving whole or small group instructions
- Follow the child's lead and interests
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/information-childcare-providers-sentoolkit/talkingtogether.pdf
- Modify the environment to support any sensory differences; e.g. ear defenders, and where possible avoid glare and harsh lighting, provide a quiet area for the child to withdraw to
- Consider the best seating for the child, e.g. where they can see and hear in whole class and group activities or where the sensory demands are lowest
- Use visual prompts to promote 'good sitting', 'good looking' and 'good listening'
- Reduce distractions during active listening times
- Ask the child or young person where they need to sit to help them listen and do their work
- Use specific praise and feedback to encourage further listening skills
- Provide clear expectations so a child and young person knows why they need to listen and for how long. Consider the use of timers



(ii) Cognition and learning (C&L)

Children and young people with learning difficulties will learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate adaptations. Some children or young people will have general difficulties with cognition and learning while others may only have difficulties in specific areas.

Difficulties with literacy are unlikely to be fully observable until a child or young person begins to engage with print and starts to become a reader. However, skills around sequencing, working memory, auditory processing and visual discrimination are needed for literacy and if these are delayed for any reason, then learning to read and write may be more difficult. Poor language skills also impact on a child or young person's ability to learn to read and comprehend or to acquire mathematical knowledge.

Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed. Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities. It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points.

Maths difficulties

Mathematics difficulties are best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and they have many causal factors. Dyscalculia falls at one end of the spectrum and will be distinguishable from other maths issues due to the severity of difficulties with number sense, including subitising, symbolic and non-symbolic magnitude comparison, and ordering.

It can occur singly but often co-occurs with other specific learning difficulties, mathematics anxiety and medical conditions. ([Definition adopted by the British Dyslexia Association 2019](#))

There are a number of reasons why an individual may have difficulty with maths. The range of contributing factors include some which affect learning more generally such as meta-cognition, language and working memory, and some factors which are specific to maths such as understanding number/quantity, understanding mathematical concepts and learning mathematical procedures and facts.



Cognition and learning (C&L) strategies

Literacy difficulties

- Offer regular opportunities to share books with adults with a focus on enjoyment as well as teaching
- Use audio books for readers who struggle to read texts and where possible track the story in the book alongside
- Use whole word reading approach alongside phonics if appropriate, especially when children are not making progress with a phonics approach
- Read the Oxfordshire literacy difficulties guidance which has a list of many strategies to address different literacy problems
- Use strategies to support independent writing, e.g. writing frames, sequencing, cue cards, highlighting, sentence starters, story boards, task checklists
- Gain ideas through multiple choice, mind maps, cloze procedure, drawing, paired writing
- Have a range of writing supports available on the child's table not just on the wall or whiteboard, e.g. phonics and word mats, word banks, personal dictionaries, and common spellings
- Use ICT to support personalised learning and reinforcement of whole class learning, e.g. speech to text software, predictive text software, lesson presentation available on student's laptop
- Use read aloud software or reading pens to read aloud words and sentences e.g. 'Select-to-Speak' on Chromebooks
- Consider changing font to a dyslexia friendly font, e.g. OpenDyslexic for Chrome and Dyslexie for Windows
- Explore eBooks from Oxford Owls, Kindle, Libby the library reading app and electronic versions of textbooks
- Use of specific ICT programmes to support reading comprehension or enhance recording and presentation of work, e.g. Clicker and symbol software and inspiration and read and write
- Encourage the development of touch typing from as early as 8 years old. Use free websites such as Typing Club, Kidztype and BBC Dance Mat Typing
- Use word prediction to help learners to focus on the writing task rather than worry about making spelling mistakes such as text suggestion in Windows, autocorrect and MS Editor when using Word, smart compose and substitutions in Google Docs
- Use free dictation (speech to text) in Windows and Chromebooks
- Consider access arrangements for assessments and embed these into the normal way of working
- Use individual and small group work to prepare the child for the learning that will take place in a later whole class activity and to teach particular skills
- Teach key vocabulary linked to a subject in a small group activity
- Encourage pupil to verbalise, share and develop ideas prior to writing with a peer or an adult
- Provide more time to complete tasks

Maths difficulties

- Use assessment to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding; target these areas explicitly in class and use small group evidence-based interventions
- Encourage pupils to verbally create a story of the concept to aid understanding
- Emphasise the many connections between mathematical facts, procedures, and concepts using real life experiences
- Encourage children to explain their answers using full sentences
- Provide time to overlearn number bonds and timetables
- Use models, representations (such as number lines and graphs) and multi-sensory resources purposefully and appropriately to promote understanding
- Support all topics with manipulatives/real objects and ensure a range of activities to support children in making conceptual links between topics, e.g. Cuisenaire rods/ Dienes blocks
- Use of specialist resources to support the development of numeracy, e.g. Numicon, number frames and rods, counting and number lines
- Ensure that pupils develop fluent recall of number facts including number bonds and times tables: games (e.g. pairs, computer programmes), rhymes (e.g. I ate and ate until I was sick on the floor, $8 \times 8 = 64$). Precision teaching can be an effective way of achieving this
- Use errorless learning techniques to motivate and increase enjoyment of tasks
- Begin with questions pupils can complete independently to enable them to experience success
- PDF worksheets can be marked up on screen using tools in Adobe and Edge including annotating, drawing on shapes and lines and highlighting
- Onscreen manipulatives e.g. clocks, hundred squares, number lines, number frames etc. can be found at The Maths Learning Center
- Chemix (free software) will help you to draw science experiments by displaying scientific equipment which you drag and drop to build the picture



Attention, organisation and memory

- Allow time to process language and to consider responses
- Use visual timetable or objects of reference to help with understanding the structure of the session, and for transitions www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/information-childcare-providers/visualtimetable.pdf
- Consider reasonable expectations in relation to specific needs, e.g. the time that may be taken to complete a task. Think of the developmental stage not chronological age
- Use movement and sensory breaks throughout the day to help the child regulate and promote focus and attention
- Provide support to manage time limited tasks, e.g. sand timer, egg timer
- Modify the language that adults use; reduce, slow down, give take up time
- Play anticipation games, e.g. ready steady go, hide/reveal something from a box, peek a boo
- Provide opportunities to develop listening and attention skills, e.g. listening to sounds in the environment, discriminating between sounds, action songs
- Speech and language advice Attention & listening - [Children's Integrated Therapies \(oxfordhealth.nhs.uk\)](http://Children's Integrated Therapies (oxfordhealth.nhs.uk))
- Occupational therapy advice Attention-and-Concentration.pdf.docx (live.com)
- Give clear, simple instructions and reminders, using appropriate communication supports such as visuals, gestures, writing and objects to help with understanding and attention
- Use engaging teaching and learning strategies, e.g. change the pace of the lesson/session, use exciting "hooks"/ attention grabbers
- Use peer support or group pupils so that they can draw on each other's skills and strengths
- Provide activities linked to interests, experiences and developmental stage
- Provide memory aids, e.g. alphabet strips, number squares, key words lists, word banks, key words with pictures and symbols
- Teach memory skills – memory games, multi-sensory prompts, mind mapping tools, barrier games www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/adult-social-care-providers/developingauditorymemoryskills.pdf
- Set tasks with clear goals and break down into smaller supported steps
- Develop memory and retention of information through regular review, chunking information, repetition, and visual supports
- Provide additional opportunities for repetition, over-learning, and consolidation of skills at an appropriate level.
- Use a 'little and often' approach



Ordinarily available SEND provision

- Give opportunities to apply knowledge to a new situation
- Questioning techniques – prepare the child or young person for a question, allow waiting time, vary open and closed questions, scaffold questions (offer choice), blanks levels of questioning
- Develop planning and organisation skills through task sheets, visual supports, task management boards, checklists
- Photograph the whiteboard using a tablet and bring it to your table, this acts as a memory aide and supports focus as attention is kept on one work area
- Place strong emphasis on meta-cognitive approaches, e.g. how can you help yourself to remember this?
- Keep tasks short, build in variety and repeat information in different ways
- Pre/post teaching of vocabulary, skills and key concepts
- Clearly label resources with pictures and symbols
- Use the child or young person's name, to cue them in, before giving an instruction
- Teach good/active listening skills and reinforce through visuals, praise and modelling
- Promote attention and on task behaviour through work breaks, task sheets, predictable routines, and additional physical movement breaks or brain breaks throughout the day
- Consider seating arrangements to minimise distractions, support focus and lessen fatigue, and provide quiet spaces that consider individual sensory needs of the child or young person
- Consider equipment and aids, such as bands, wobble cushions, and fidget toys
- Assistive technology (AT) can be used to keep track of tasks, give reminders, support organisation and schedule time limits and breaks
- Access to alternative methods of recording, e.g. mind-mapping, video or audio recording, posters, dictation, use of ICT
- Use voice notes available in laptops / iPads and Dictaphones, to record ideas and sequence thoughts



Problem solving

- Play alongside, scaffold and model new ways of playing and learning
- Talk aloud in simple sentences to model your thinking and problem solving in play
- Use exploratory play to support development of problem solving skills
- Boxes of toys and equipment should be labelled with words and pictures depicting the content
- Break down skills and activities into smaller achievable steps
- Use backward chaining to teach the skills to complete the task with increasing complexity and decreased support in reverse order www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/childreducationandfamilies/informationforchildcareproviders/goodpractice/sentoolkit/Backwardchaining.pdf
- Encourage curiosity, energy and enthusiasm
- Support development of behaviours children use in order to learn. [Development Matters - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) and/or [Characteristics of Effective Learning – Birth To 5 Matters](#)
- Support understanding of sequencing through play activities – inset puzzles and large peg boards, sequencing www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/childreducationandfamilies/informationforchildcareproviders/goodpractice/sentoolkit/Sequencing.pdf
- Support development of perception and reasoning skills through a variety of play activities, e.g. cause and effect toys – ball runs, switch toys, www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/childreducationandfamilies/informationforchildcareproviders/goodpractice/sentoolkit/Causeandeffect.pdf
- messy play and exploring objects/activities, filling and emptying activities, relational play and building, matching, selecting and naming games, sorting activities www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/adult-social-care-providers/matchingandsorting.pdf
- Use photos to help the child link past and present – useful for predicting, making choices, sequencing
- Develop problem solving by asking ‘What do you know about problems like this?’ or ‘What ways of solving them have you used before?’
- Use THUNKs (icebreakers/questions that make children think and have no clear answer)
- Develop problem solving skills by modelling them, by thinking loud, using open ended questions, and celebrating and demonstrating what mistakes can tell us
- Break down tasks into small steps – model and scaffold them
- Encourage children to order pictures of steps to assess and reinforce understanding
- Explore a range of different concrete objects/materials/pictures/texts to encourage understanding of similarities, differences, pattern and change
- Use methods that develop cognitive function, e.g. comparison, categorisation, metacognition



Play

- Follow young children's interests, e.g. go to activities that are already engaging the child and look for ways of extending learning there rather than taking the child away.
- Have rich play experiences together – support children to follow their interests and explore what fascinates them.
- Help them to notice details
- Introduce small variations to maintain interest or attention
- Follow their lead and value their lines of enquiry
- Be a safe, secure and useful play partner
- Use descriptive commentary to give language to the child's play www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/information-childcare-providers/Descriptivecommentary.pdf
- Provide developmentally appropriate motivating toys, experiences and activities to develop early object use through exploring objects and symbolic representation 'using' items even if not for the intended purpose, i.e. a banana for a phone [Promoting high quality play | Oxfordshire County Council](#)
- Use a copy box to develop and extend play www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/information-childcare-providers/Copybox.pdf and imitation skills through role play and small world play
- There are strong links between physical development and cognitive development. Young children need to be able to engage in lots of physical activity, e.g. balancing, throwing, catching, climbing. Learning opportunities should be planned to be active and take place outside as well as inside
- Practice turn taking through simple activities, ball runs, pushing a train round a track, switch toys etc www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/information-childcare-providers/Takingturns.pdf
- Provide toys and objects that are easily handled, have a range of different properties and range in shape, size, texture, colour and sound to support development of visual perception, discrimination and classification skills www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/adult-social-care-providers/developingvisualperceptualskills.pdf
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/adult-social-care-providers/visualperceptualskillsandstrategiestohelp.pdf
- Provide plenty of mark making, drawing and pre-writing activities to develop fine and finer motor skills
- Teach playground games
- Provide structured interactive play opportunities
- Deliver circle times and group games with a social skills focus (communicating, listening, recognising and expressing emotions)
- Focus on a social skill for the week, and recognise this as part of house points or reward system
- Use videos to explore social communication
- Teach recognising and naming emotions, and strategies to remain emotionally regulated
- Ensure children and young people know each other's and adults' names
- Structured teaching of specific social skills within a small group, e.g. social stories, evidence-based interventions, role play
- Use play-based activities as required (stage rather than age) to support the development of cognition and learning skills e.g. engagement, matching, cause and effect, sequencing, problem solving, language concepts

Engagement and independence skills

- Consider how the child's key person will be an enabler to help him/her to access learning opportunities, other adults, peers and the environment
- Sit the child where they can best see and hear the adult in whole and small group activities
- Consider setting layout with areas of calm, minimal distractions
- Set up predictable daily routines
- Use visual prompts to engage the child in making choices, e.g. photos, symbols, objects
- Use props and visual aids when giving information, telling stories etc
- Keep expectations clear and consistent
- Avoid overloading the child with too many tasks and instructions at once. Match instructions to the developmental stage of the child
- Make sure learning opportunities and expectations are challenging enough to be interesting but not so far out of the child's reach that they may become frustrated/or experience failure
- Help the child to feel secure and happy through your actions, positive messages and praise
- Allow the child to lead – OWL (observe, wait, listen) www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/information-childcare-providers-sentoolkit/talkingtogether.pdf and follow their lead www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/information-childcare-providers/Allowingthechildtotakethelead.pdf
- Ensure resources are accessible – work banks, sound mats, manipulatives, number lines/tracks
- Use scaffolded teaching
- Teach independence skills through modelling, visual supports and problem-solving techniques, and check understanding as often as possible
- Backward chaining (breaking down the steps of a self-help skill and teaching them in reverse order)
- Clear and specific positive labelled praise and feedback – praising efforts, approaches, application of skills rather than outcomes
- Promotion of a growth mindset
- Linking topics to child or young person's interests to foster enthusiasm, confidence and embed learning
- Set up predictable daily routines and structures.
- Spend time building supportive relationships to ensure children are confident to participate
- Adapted curriculum: consider the resources needed, use different assessment tools, use different recording methods, consider groupings and seating arrangements, room layout
- Plan multi-sensory teaching opportunities taking account of differing strengths and interests
- Access to alternative methods of recording such as mind-mapping, video or audio recording, posters, dictation
- Use IT to support access to learning
- Observe the child or young person, reflect and consider questions such as 'How can I change the learning activity to stimulate X's curiosity?' or 'What can I change about this experience to encourage X to persist?'



(iii) Social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH)

All young children need to learn how to make friends and interact with others. It is expected they will develop these skills gradually through experience and with caring adult support. However, children or young people who have emerging difficulties in this area may find it significantly harder to:

- make and maintain appropriate and healthy relationships
- regulate their emotions
- communicate their emotions
- manage transitions
- experience a positive sense of self

Children or young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties and mental health needs which manifest themselves in many ways.

These may include becoming withdrawn, isolated, distressed, behaving in ways that could cause harm to themselves and others and difficulty following routines and instructions. These distressed behaviours may be persistent and may indicate social, emotional, mental health needs.

A small number of children will have social, emotional and mental health needs identified at a very young age. For many children or young people, needs may go unrecognised until they reach a group setting and are exposed to the multiple demands of a bigger peer group in a highly interactive environment.

It must be recognised that behaviour is a way of communicating

Children or young people can develop social, emotional needs or mental health difficulties for many reasons.

Sometimes these are related to:

- Attachment disorder
- Adverse childhood experiences (ACES)
- Autism
- A medically unexplained condition
- A response to an unmet need, e.g. a child who has difficulty with communicating thoughts and ideas may find inappropriate ways to express him/herself
- Other learning needs, either as part of a condition or disorder, e.g. Attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD-HI hyperactive/impulsive type, ADHD-I inattentive/distractable type or ADHD-C combined type) This is rarely able to be clearly identified in the early years although there may be indicators of difficulties in this area
- Sensory processing difficulties

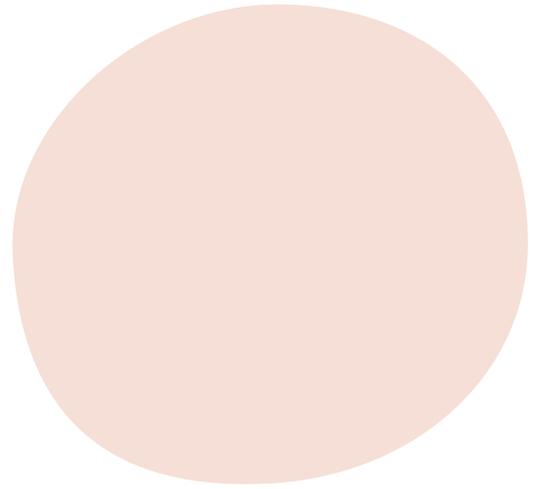


Social, emotional and mental health strategies

The early years SEND toolkit (social, emotional and mental health strategies section) contains ideas for activities, strategies and resources.

Emotional regulation

- Consider what the child or young person's behaviour is communicating. Planning matched to type of need, and presenting behaviours and triggers are explored
- Make sure the key person is available as they arrive to welcome them and help them to settle in and say goodbye to parent/carer [Relationship with the key person in a childcare setting | Anna Freud](#)
- Acknowledge emotions in non verbal and verbal ways to support their developing understanding of feelings [Emotions - Help for early years providers - GOV.UK \(education.gov.uk\)](#)
- Build in opportunities to develop emotional literacy, e.g. through stories, role play, play with puppets etc
- Consider any sensory differences that are causing unusual or challenging behaviours [Sensory differences - a guide for all audiences \(autism.org.uk\)](#)
- Arrange for activities to be available and planned into the day to de-escalate heightened levels of arousal, anxiety
- Build in sensory or regulatory breaks
- Talk with families the things that generally help their child or young person to regulate
- Adapt the environment if they are overwhelmed by a busy and varied environment with lots of choice and sensory input
- Use quiet areas for calm down time. Ensure there is a safe space for to regulate with reduced stimulus
- Ensure the environment offers support with transitions which are often key triggers times
- Supporting adults should be aware of and monitor their own regulation and swap with other staff members when needed [Early years practitioner wellbeing support - Help for early years providers - GOV.UK \(education.gov.uk\)](#)
- Create minimal changes of routine, familiar key adults and environment
- Look at previously successful strategies to support independent learning skills
- Staff training in de-escalation strategies and positive intervention
- Use of specific attachment and trauma-informed strategies as appropriate to need
- Use of co-regulation techniques to support self-regulation
- Enhanced pastoral support: regular opportunities for check in time with a trusted member of staff through the day/week to discuss what is working well and access support as required



Positive mental health and wellbeing

- Consider what the child or young person's behaviour is communicating
- Work closely with the family to better understand the child's home situation, e.g. for adopted children see – realistic positivity: understanding the additional needs of children placed for adoption, and supporting families when needs are unexpected. [Realistic positivity \(ncb.org.uk\)](https://www.ncb.org.uk)
- Ensure staff are aware of the impact adverse childhood experiences can have [ACEs \(acesonlinelearning.com\)](https://acesonlinelearning.com)
- Observe, notice and respond to a child's level of wellbeing using the Leuven Scales of Well Being and Involvement. [Oxfordshire Developmental Journal \(ODJ\)](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/developmental-journal) or [The Leuven Scale - Emotionally Healthy Schools](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/the-leuven-scale)
- Ensure policy and practice promote whole setting approaches to wellbeing and resilience. Develop a whole-setting approach to emotional and physical wellbeing [Early Years toolkit - Promoting wellbeing | Oxfordshire County Council](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/early-years-toolkit)
- Consider how you support self esteem development www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/childreducationandfamilies/informationforchildcareproviders/goodpractice/sentoolkit/ignoringanddistracting.pdf
- Flexible groupings to develop a sense of belonging, self-esteem, emotional literacy, resilience, self-awareness
- Provide opportunities to develop organisational skills and independence
- Develop emotional literacy through explicit teaching of emotional vocabulary and discussion of emotions at an appropriate time, e.g. zones of regulation

Social skills

- Use individual or small social communication group work to support personal learning outcomes and build self-confidence, e.g. friendship, social skills or nurture groups [The Six Principles of Nurture - NurtureUK](https://www.nurtureuk.com), Spirals, Talkabout, Socially Speaking
- Help children develop relationship skills www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/childreducationandfamilies/informationforchildcareproviders/goodpractice/sentoolkit/helpingchildrenlearnhowtoproblemsolve.pdf
- Create social stories to support with social communication differences to learn social rules [socialstories \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/socialstories)
- Direct teaching of active listening strategies
- Opportunities for taking responsibility, opportunities to take on a role outside current expertise
- Provide opportunities for social and emotional development, e.g. social skills, buddy systems, circle time, circle of friends)

Anxiety (attendance) including EBSA

- Consider where the child feels calm, safe and comfortable for particular activities
- Ensure consistent key person/s offering a strong relationship sensitive to the child or young person's needs
- Use areas of special interest to engage in motivational learning
- Keep a close working relationship with parents/carers so that everyone understands and is listened to, and is supportive of the child and young person
- Provide opportunities to explore the development of close relationships, enabling the growth of self-assurance and promoting a sense of belonging
- Support periods of transition and other key trigger times
- Child and young person's voice is key
- Pre-warn changes in routine and staffing
- Provide support in unstructured times, e.g. with clubs and adult-led activities
- Provide calm, quiet spaces during the day
- Discuss managing worries with the class
- Provide whole class sessions on relaxation techniques
- Be mindful of friendship difficulties and act to address concerns
- Regularly check ins throughout the day
- Explore if there are learning or sensory differences to be addressed

Positive behaviour support

- Aim for consistent daily routines so children know what to expect and what is coming next
- Don't let the routine become so rigid that you can't make changes to meet specific needs
- Consider whether some children might need more regular outdoor experiences, e.g. children who are more active, more physical and find it hard to sit still for long
- Use visual timetables and resources such as sand timers and lead in time to prepare for changes of routine or activity, e.g. two minute/ one minute warning supported by visuals
- Use praise for being ('what a lovely smile') and praise for doing ('thank you for tidying up the puzzles; that was really helpful') [Giving Effective Praise: \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/giving-effective-praise)
- Use suitable assessment tools to identify and address any unmet learning needs that may be underlying behaviours [Oxfordshire Developmental Journal \(ODJ\)](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/developmental-journal)
- Have a behaviour policy adopted by all staff (and shared with parents) that is appropriate for all
- Bear in mind 'stage not age' it is likely that the difficulties the child is experiencing will relate to an earlier phase of development than their chronological age
- Check all staff's expectations of the child's behaviour are realistic and appropriate both to the child's current emotional state and developmental stage not age
- Recognise all behaviour is communication. Consider why the behaviour is happening as opposed to trying to tackle the behaviour itself. The iceberg model can help explore and unpick what's going on [Behaviouriceberg.pdf \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/behaviouriceberg.pdf)



Ordinarily available SEND provision

- Draw on relational approaches to have a culture of self reflection amongst staff whereby staff can reflect on their own interactions and responses and consider whether an alternative response could lead to a different outcome
- Use trauma informed approaches Microsoft Word - [PACE School.docx \(fife.scot\)](#)
- Closely observe triggers that may help in understanding a child's distress or behaviour [ABCchart.pdf \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](#)
- Complete risk assessments relating to any health and safety issues [Risk Assessment](#)
- Ensure all adults use positive, enabling language
- Use a fresh start principle to encourage a warm welcome to each new session every day
- Check use of voice, gesture and body language
- Consistently implement an agreed positive behaviour support plan (sometimes called a positive relationship plan) [Positive Behaviour Support plan](#)
- Ensure enhanced transition planning into school or the next setting is supported and implemented
- For children with autism use Oxfordshire's SCERTs in Action - a framework that supports assessment and planning for children with autism. SCERTS = social communication emotional regulation transactional support
- See [Autism Education Trust](#) for further information on effectively supporting children with a diagnosis of autism
- Flexibility built into the behaviour policy to accommodate different SEMH needs, e.g. adjustments to behaviour and uniform policies in accordance with the expectations of reasonable adjustments set out in the Equality Act 2010
- Positive behaviour system in place for less structured times of the day and for extra-curricular activities, with planned interventions
- Time out opportunities within and outside the classroom which follow procedures agreed with all, and focus on getting back on track/ task completion
- Staff are vigilant to perceived injustice and clearly explain how matters will be addressed and resolved
- Seating plans and classroom layout adjusted to meet sensory, attention, social and emotional needs, e.g. are they better placed near to the teacher, which peers should they sit with?
- Interspersing of non-preferred and preferred tasks
- Use buddies and peer mentors for support and modelling



(iv) Sensory and physical needs (S&P)

Physical disability or delay (PD)

This section describes children or young people who have a greater need than most of their peers for support with their physical needs. This can impact on their learning.

Many children or young people with physical needs require ongoing minor adaptations to the learning environment that would be considered as reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

Unmet physical needs may impact on the child or young person's ability to learn in the same way and at the same rate as their peers. The child or young person may also have linked social and emotional needs.

Some children or young people with physical disability or delay will have had their needs identified at an early age, may already have received support and will need on-going support and interventions. Where children or young people have a diagnosed progressive physical condition, e.g. Duchenne muscular dystrophy, it is important to plan and prepare early for later needs.

Some children or young people with physical disability or delay will have had their needs identified at an early age, may already have received support and will need on-going support and interventions from specialist education, health or social care teams. Where children or young people have a diagnosed progressive physical condition, e.g. Duchenne muscular dystrophy, it is important to plan and prepare early for later needs.

In some cases, physical disability or delay may not become apparent until the child or young person is older, and their needs impact on learning. Other children or young people may have a temporary condition such as an injured limb or require post-operative care and need appropriate support to access learning.

Hearing loss/deafness

Many children or young people with a hearing loss/deafness will have their needs identified early.

Some younger children may have needs that go unrecognised until they reach a group setting or are expected to undertake tasks that require them to use hearing skills in a different context. Children or young people may have a temporary hearing loss that fluctuates or acquire a hearing loss later. This could be caused through illness or accident or might be because they have a progressive condition or a condition that has a late onset. The most common cause of temporary and fluctuating hearing loss in childhood is commonly known as glue ear.

If a child appears to have a hearing difficulty that has not been identified previously, parents should be advised to take their child to the GP. If needed, the GP can refer the child to paediatric audiology for further assessment.

The confirmation of a diagnosis of a permanent hearing loss or hearing aids being prescribed for a child will trigger a referral to the SENSS deaf and hearing support team (SENSS DHS) if families consent to this. Teachers of deaf children and young people in SENSS DHS offer specialist advice and training on strategies and teaching approaches.





Vision impairment (VI)

Vision difficulties range from mild through to severe. Many children and young people have their vision corrected by spectacles. A child or young person should be considered to have a vision difficulty if this is not due to basic refractive errors and cannot be corrected by glasses. Many children and young people with vision difficulties will have their needs identified early and will be supported by the SENSS vision impairment (VI) team.

Some children and young people may have needs that go unrecognised until they are expected to undertake tasks that require them to use vision skills in a different context. Some acquire a vision loss through illness or accident. A vision condition can impact on other areas, for example a child's social and emotional development.

If a child appears to have a vision difficulty that has not been identified previously, parents should be advised to take their child to an optician or the GP. The optician or GP can make a referral to an eye hospital.

Diagnosis of a vision impairment by the eye hospital will trigger the involvement of the SENSS vision impairment team who will work alongside the school to support the child's access to learning.

Multi-sensory impairment (MSI)

A child or young person with a multi-sensory impairment has a permanent hearing loss together with a vision impairment that cannot be corrected by wearing glasses. Some people also call this condition dual sensory loss or deafblindness. The numbers of children with multi-sensory impairment are very small.

Children and young people who have multi-sensory impairment are usually already known to one or both the SENSS vision impairment and SENSS deaf and hearing support teams. Specialist teachers in these teams may refer to the SENSS MSI team once the dual diagnosis is confirmed.

If a child appears to have undiagnosed difficulties with their vision or hearing, parent/carers should be advised to seek advice from the GP.

Whilst some of the statements in the vision impairment and deafness strategies may be of benefit to a child or young person with multi-sensory impairment, the needs are specific, and guidance from specialist teacher/s should be followed.



Sensory and physical needs (S&P) strategies

Physical disability

- Organise and adapt your learning environment to enable easy and safe movement, and to support as much independent access as possible, e.g. declutter, put the child's coat peg/locker at the end
- Consider how the child or young person will transfer between activities and move around the setting
- Complete risk assessments including a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) for onsite and offsite activities
- Plan the support needed for personal care – eating and drinking, dressing, going to the toilet.
- Provide seating to help when changing clothes. Give the option to wear clothes that are loose fitting
- Sit the child where they can best see and hear the adult in whole and small group activities using specialist seating if needed
- Manage the pace of learning to allow additional time for completing tasks
- Break down skills and activities into smaller achievable steps
- Plan for rest breaks during the day if required. Have a designated quiet area to have physical rest
- Allow time for the child to practise skills
- Provide equipment or resources to support learning, e.g. bigger puzzles, a range of balls and beanbags, larger mark making tools
- Provide sensory and kinaesthetic experiences indoors and out, for example shaving foam or fine sand to draw in, big painting on vertical surfaces
- Provide developmentally appropriate toys, experiences and activities that enable the child to learn without feeling over challenged
- Aim to support the child while encouraging him/her to do everything that they can for themselves
- Give support for social interactions and building friendships
- Provide activities for developing fine motor skills, e.g. threading beads, play dough, cutting skills, using tools
- Provide activities for developing gross motor skills, e.g. throwing and catching, jumping, climbing, riding a tricycle or balance bike
- Provide a choice board so that the child can choose activities that may not be available or physically accessible to them
- Arrange training for staff to deliver specific programmes and/or use specific equipment and for manual handling if needed
- Consider the location of the classroom in advanced planning
- Plan off-site activities carefully to ensure full and safe participation
- Explore recording methods as an alternative to handwriting e.g. use a scribe or computer, or voice to text
- Teach ICT skills explicitly such as touch typing and mouse accuracy
- Use accessibility options on computers, e.g. keyboard shortcuts to bypass mouse actions
- Use resources that reduce the need for manipulation if appropriate
- Provide individual or small group interventions to help the child or young person accept and manage their physical disability and develop a positive self-image
- Have access arrangements in place for assessments and embed these into the normal way of working
- Follow advice from therapists for management and to support the development of self-help skills

Vision impairment

- Use an environmental checklist to consider adaptations such as highlighting steps
- Ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place
- Encourage the child or young person to wear his/her spectacles if prescribed – if possible, keep a spare pair handy
- Position the child or young person where he/she can best see the adult in whole class and group activities
- Ensure good lighting and be aware of the impact of shadows, glare and reflected light
- Think about using blinds/curtains and stand-alone lights
- Use a clean whiteboard, a contrasting pen and well-spaced, clear writing
- Read out loud any information written on a board
- Adopt multi-sensory teaching approaches
- Support access to specialist equipment and technology
- Consider support needed for personal care – eating and drinking, dressing.
- Allow additional time to complete tasks or modify the task, e.g. fewer questions
- Always introduce yourself when working with a child or young person with vision impairment
- Always address a child or young person with vision impairment by name and use names of other children or young people around them rather than using “you”
- Give clear verbal instructions, descriptions and explanations to accompany each learning activity
- Ensure books are accessible (tactile, large-print, electronic)
- Use real objects and context to support understanding
- Be aware of the child or young person’s eye condition and the impact it has on learning, personal development and daily tasks.
- Prepare in advance any adapted lesson resources needed
- Make use of accessibility options on computers
- Have access arrangements in place for assessments and embed these into the normal way of working if required
- Seek advice and support for mobility, orientation and independence skills from the social and community services vision impairment team
- Plan all off-site activities carefully. Alert site staff in advance that a child or young person with vision impairment will be visiting
- Provide individual intervention to help the child or young person understand and manage his/her vision impairment and develop a positive self-image



Deafness (hearing loss)

- Consider adaptations to the learning environment that may be needed
- Use quiet areas where appropriate
- Walls, ceilings and floors may need acoustic modifications
- Ensure good lighting
- Sit the child where they can best see and hear the adult in whole and small group activities
- Check you have the child or young person's attention before you start speaking
- The child is likely to use lip-reading to support their listening – make sure they can see your face and try not to move round the room while you are talking
- Deliver instructions using simple clear language
- Reinforce spoken language with visual cues and clues. A multi-sensory approach is vital in phonics sessions when children are establishing their phoneme-grapheme correlation and may mis-hear sounds or not have access to the sounds due to their hearing threshold
- Repeat comments made by others in a group which the child may have missed or misheard
- Be aware that during outdoor physical activities it may be harder for the child to hear and follow instructions
- Use small group activities in a quiet environment to support the child's listening and learning
- Provide opportunities for the child to hear and use language in meaningful situations
- Use individual and small group activities to prepare the child for the learning that will take place in a later whole group activity and to introduce and consolidate new language and concepts
- Manage the pace of learning to allow additional time for completion of tasks and time for clear explanation to ensure linguistic understanding
- Check the child's understanding of instruction and new vocabulary through open comments with their name at the start, e.g. "John, show me..."
- Use peers and buddies who have good language and communication skills to model and help develop interactions
- Give support for social interactions and building friendships
- Help children and young people to better understand deafness and how they can help to include their deaf peer/s
- Ensure that learning targets and strategies are implemented throughout the child's day with individual or small group sessions and adult support as needed
- Be prepared for fluctuations in hearing levels that will affect access to learning
- Ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place
- Think about access to spoken language in large group situations such as assemblies
- Be aware of large reverberant rooms such as halls, gyms, science labs where it is more difficult to hear
- Use subtitles and/or give a written transcript when showing video clips (do not expect a child with hearing loss to take notes at the same time as watching)
- Provide individual or small group interventions to help the child or young person accept and manage their hearing loss and develop a positive self-image
- Have access arrangements in place for assessments and embed these into the normal way of working if required

Sensory

- Discuss strengths and challenges with parents/ carers about their child's sensory preferences at home, e.g. sensitive to noise or dressing issues
- Observe the child or young person's day to identify key areas of difficulties. Take into account the environment, the child's sensory preferences and any triggers you can identify
- Complete an environmental audit [Sensory Audit for Schools and Classrooms \(education.qld.gov.au\)](#). Sensory circuits - Sensory Circuits: A Sensory Motor Skills Programme for Children by [Jane Horwood](#)
- Use proprioceptive activities regularly throughout the day www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/cit/resources/sensory-strategies/
- Provide movement breaks/movement passes for secondary school age children and young people (proprioceptive activities) - www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/cit/resources/sensory-strategies/
- Provide regular breaks, e.g. Time away from sensory overload (quiet, low stimulation), including controlling physical elements like light and [sound](#), managing classroom activities, and implementing specific [teaching strategies Creating a Calm, Low Arousal Environment for SEN Pupils \(inclusiveteach.com\)](#)
- Provide visual timetables and now and next boards
- Provide the child or young person with predictability and advanced notice of changes and support these with writing or visuals
- Notify them of changes in teacher, classroom and teaching assistants



12) Resources

Legislation, statutory guidance and Department for Education guidance

- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#)
- [The SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years](#)
- [The Department for Education SEND pages](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)

Overarching SEND

The [Nasen SEND Gateway](#) is supported by government and designed to be a 'one stop shop' or repository of relevant information and support.

Local Resources

- [Early Years SEN toolkit](#)
- [Quality First Teaching](#)
- [Oxfordshire School Inclusion Team website](#)