

Additional and/or different support in mainstream schools

A Guide for Parents and Carers



Special educational needs and disabilities

Additional and/or different support for Special Educational Needs in mainstream schools

A proportion of the school's budget is used to support pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Schools also receive additional money from the Local Authority (LA) to cover additional and/or different support for pupils special educational needs and disabilities including pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. It is the school's responsibility to arrange the support that the pupil needs.

The school may use these funds to provide:

- Special equipment
- Special teaching materials (programmes of work specifically devised in order to meet your child's needs)
- Staff training (specific to your child's difficulties)
- Additional staff – this may be a mealtime assistant, a learning support assistant (LSA), or in exceptional circumstances may be additional teacher time

Having additional and/or different help should lead to progress. Schools have responsibility for planning additional and/or different support, and should make the best use of the resources available to them in order to meet your child's needs.

What are the aims of this additional and/or different support?

- To ensure your child can attend a mainstream school and be fully included with the other children
- To give your child the same opportunities to learn as all other children

- To ensure that your child takes part in every one of the subjects taught in school
- To help your child learn and make progress
- To help your child learn more independently
- To work towards a time when your child has made enough progress so that the support may be reduced or not needed. This would be discussed with you at a review.

Additional staff for SEN could be used to:

Help your child indirectly

- Helping your child to be part of the class
- Preparing materials and/or equipment
- Adapting materials for your child (i.e. simplifying a worksheet)
- Keeping records
- Observing your child in class
- Helping other children relate to your child
- Working with other children while the teacher works with your child

Work directly with your child

- Helping to implement your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Checking that your child has understood an activity or lesson
- Showing your child how to do something your child finds difficult
- Ensuring that your child takes part in a class activity (i.e. PE or listening to a story)
- Helping your child if there are physical difficulties (i.e. mobility, toileting, dressing, getting around the school)
- Working with your child in a small group, involving one or more other children

Individual Support

Extra help should be clearly focused rather than simply used to coax children through lessons, which are not sufficiently differentiated to match their ability.

Individual help where needed, should aim to promote pupils' feelings of success and achievement; help them to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and choices; work towards maximum pupil independence.

Full-time 1:1 support

Full-time 1:1 support is not necessary to meet the majority of children's special educational needs. However, in rare cases it may be necessary to meet an individual child's needs if they are extremely severe or complex.

Disadvantages to full-time 1:1 support

- Children can become isolated or made to seem 'different'.
- It can create a 'social barrier' so that a child with individual support has very little involvement with the other children.
- A child can become too dependent on having someone there to help; sometimes this leads to 'learned helplessness' when a child always relies on help.
- It can prevent a child from having direct contact with the class teacher and other children. All children need to learn to relate to lots of different people.
- It is not helpful for either pupils or parents to be so exclusively involved with the LSA that they are unaware of the broader responsibilities of the teacher.



Learning to get on with a range of adults in school is an important experience for all children. When children spend a large proportion of the day with one adult, a very close and intense relationship can develop. This can lead to a deskilling of other staff who are denied the opportunity to work with these pupils also.

Sharing support with other children

Working in a pair or small group with an adult is often more effective than 1:1 support.

Students supporting each other

Students supporting each other through friendship and/or peer mentoring schemes are also an important component of quality education and preparation for life outside school.

Other resources

The Local Authority (LA) also supports schools in their work with children with SEN through centrally employed staff who can provide advice, support and training (i.e. Pre-school Advisory Teacher, Hearing Impairment and Visual Impairment Advisory Services, ICT Advisory Service, Behaviour and Learning Support Team, Educational Psychology Service, Physical Difficulties Advisory Service, Children's Disability Team, and Social Care).

The Health Authority also supports schools in their work with children with SEN through centrally employed staff who can provide advice, support and training (i.e. Speech & Language therapists, Occupational therapists, Physiotherapists and School Nurses)

Your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) should identify what additional and/or different support your child is receiving in school.

Individual Education Plans (IEP's) are often made for children who have special educational needs

and should be reviewed at least twice during the school year. You should always be kept informed about your child's IEP's, and should be consulted every time your child's IEP is reviewed.

Where schools have a whole-school policy of individual planning and recording which covers all pupils, your child may not need a separate IEP since in those schools, the interventions for children at School Action, School Action Plus and with Statements will be recorded as part of the lesson plans along with a record of your child's progress and outcomes of those interventions – in the same way as for other children.

If you need to know more about the additional and/or different support your child is receiving at school you should arrange to meet with your schools special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) or equivalent.



If you require this leaflet in a different format or language, or want further information and support, please contact:

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