

IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE'S SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS/DISABILITIES

The 0-25 SEND Code of Practice (2015, section 6.14) states:

'All schools should have a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEN. The benefits of early identification are widely recognised – identifying need at the earliest point and then making effective provision improves long-term outcomes for the child or young person.'

Teachers need to:

Understand 'less than expected progress'

Pupils making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances will demonstrate progress that, despite 'quality first teaching' targeted at areas of weakness:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline;
- Fails to match or better the child/young person's previous rate of progress;
- Fails to close or widens the attainment gap between the child and their peers/national norms;

Take a proactive approach to potential need

(0-25 SEND Code of Practice (CoP), 2015, section 5.5)

- Appropriate whole-class/group screening for core skill difficulties;
- Monitoring children/young people's responses to key learning or developmental tasks (allowing for varied rates of progress);
- Universal tracking of assessments, observations, recording;
- Awareness of individual significant learning and developmental differences;

Take actions arising from concerns about a child/young person's learning and development

- As an early response, consult and work with - as appropriate - the SENCO, parents, other key staff with present/past teaching/pastoral responsibility, special educational needs/disability specialists (requires SENCO and parental approval), etc;
- Check student records/files for evidence of previous progress/concerns, interventions and pupil responses as a basis for possible action; and simultaneously...
- Explore alternative explanations to special educational needs/disabilities (e.g. other causes of learning vulnerability such as health, socio-emotional issues, etc.) ; consider whether an Early Help Assessment is required;
- An analysis of the child's learning and developmental needs;
- Personalised screening/assessment for particular difficulties;
- Assessment for possible special educational needs/disability (e.g. formal and informal evidence gathering, including pupil and parent views); alongside...
- Extra teaching or other rigorous interventions designed to secure better progress, where required (The pupil's response to such support can help identify their particular needs);

Involving parents and the child/young person

- The school should involve the child/young person's parents from first identification - supporting parents to understand their child's needs, and involving them in setting clear outcomes, reviewing progress towards them, discussing the activities and support that will help achieve them, and identifying the responsibilities of the parent, the pupil and the school;

Once a child/young person's need for 'SEN support' is confirmed:

- On identifying a child/young needs 'SEN support', the education provider **must** work in partnership with parents to establish the support the child needs and inform them about the Local Offer (CoP, section 5.37). They should talk regularly to parents and meet them at least three times each year (CoP, section 6.65);
- Where a child/young person is identified as having special educational needs/disabilities, schools should take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place. This 'SEN support' should take the form of a four-part cycle (the graduated approach – CoP, sections 6.44-6.56) through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the pupil's needs and of what supports them in making good progress and securing good outcomes (CoP, section 6.44).