SEND Early Identification Toolkit
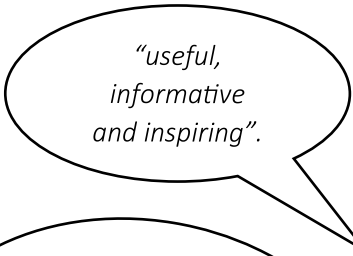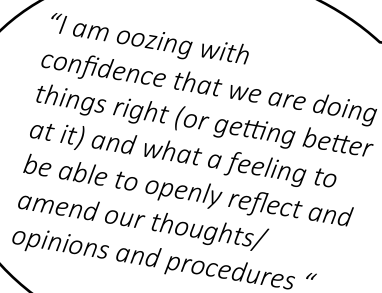
2017 - 2018

Introduction

The NYCC ISOS Review on Local SEND Support, Services and Provision reported that the "needs [of CYP with SEND] had not been identified early" and "there needs to be a consistency of identification".

A group of primary and secondary school SENCos volunteered their time to work with the SEN adviser and together they became known as the 'Early Identification Group'. They used their knowledge, experience, methodology, practice and resources to examine in detail their understanding of identifying and assessing children and young people's (CYP) needs in a timely fashion. As a result the Inclusion Service has produced this guidance to help schools respond to the ISOS review and to answer the second bullet point required in the annual SEN information report for parents which asks schools to report on the their "policies for identifying children and young people with SEN and assessing their needs" They also moderated their decisions about who would be placed at SEN support (K code on the school census).

The SENCos involved found this activity highly useful and that it impacted on their work in school.

"useful, informative and inspiring".

"I am oozing with confidence that we are doing things right (or getting better at it) and what a feeling to be able to openly reflect and amend our thoughts/ opinions and procedures "

Comments from SENCos at the end of the project

The guidance resulting from the above collaboration has been enhanced with supplementary resources in order to form the 'SEND Early Identification Toolkit'. Our aim is that this resource will be used by schools and settings across North Yorkshire in order to ensure timely and accurate identification of children and young people's special educational needs and disabilities.

Early identification of a pupil having Special Education Needs

What policies do you have for identifying children and young people with SEN?

How do you assess their needs?

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (SEN CoP) states:

"Class and subject teachers, supported by the senior leadership team, should make regular assessments of progress for all pupils. These should seek to identify pupils making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances. This can be characterised by progress which:

- is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline;

- fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress;

- fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers;

- widens the attainment gap." *(6.17)*

"It can include progress in areas other than attainment – for instance where a pupil needs to make additional progress with wider development or social needs in order to make a successful transition to adult life." *(6.18)*

Link to

the Code of Practice

'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years

Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities'

Guidance for schools and settings

Please refer to the summary [diagram/poster](#) which illustrates the following:

- Ensure there is high quality inclusive teaching and whole school systems for assessing, planning, implementing and reviewing pupil progress in school.

- Internal school tracking systems, pupil progress meetings, teacher observations or pupil and parents' concerns highlight that the progress, wider development or social needs of the pupil has slowed or pupil not making a successful transition to adult life. Make a 'short note' of these discussions with parents in the child's school records/file (CoP 6.39).

- Remember to keep files and data safe by following the most up to date legislation on data protection. In addition, follow the retention of SEN requirements. These currently are : To be destroyed 35 years from closure of the file, however, if a looked after child then the file must be kept 75 years from date of birth or 15 years from the date of death, if the child dies before 18th birthday. Click [here](#) for relevant documentation.

- The teacher, and other relevant staff, supported by the SENCo, gather informal information from parents and pupil. Try to develop a good understanding of the pupil's strengths and areas of difficulty.

- Find out what is the probable barrier to learning. (CoP 6.38). This should include high quality and accurate formative assessment, using effective tools and early assessment materials, as well as data on progress. Part of assessment should involve monitoring behaviour and attendance data. This may help to identify patterns in behaviour and attendance which identify barriers to learning. For example, the data might be used to examine whether the child's/young person's pattern of attendance is related to a particular lesson, day of the week, teacher or a home issue by:
  - ~ analysing information recorded on monitoring systems

  - ~ liaising with other departments - including those with responsibility for attendance and behaviour
  - ~ examining data on sanction and rewards points accrued.

  Click [here](#) for some tools and assessments.

- Start with the desired outcome, then the expected progress and attainment and the views and wishes of the pupil and parent. Explore whether this can be provided from your school's core offer – usually found in your 'High Quality Teaching' (previously re-ferred to as Quality First Teaching QFT), whole school provision map; or, is something additional or different required? (Does the child have high quality, targeted and evidenced based intervention to help diminish the gap? Is there another individualised method or strategy which would overcome any barriers to learning? Is there a temporary emotional disturbance in child's life? Has the child received all possible reasonable adjustments to class teaching to meet his needs?

- Write down a clear date for reviewing the progress (*usually one term but it may be less depending on the nature of the child's barrier to learning)* and all involved should be clear about how they will help the pupil reach the expected outcome. (CoP 6.40-6.43)

- If the gap closes or the wider developmental/ social issues are resolved then the child returns to receiving high quality first teaching and is monitored carefully and is not placed at SEN support. However, be sure there no wider developmental or social needs preventing a successful transition to adult life.

- If the child still does not make progress or there is continued developmental/social issues then the child is identified as having SEN and is recorded as being at 'SEN Support'.

SEN Support

"A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age"

(CoP 6.15)

SEN support is "additional or different" help provided in pre-schools, schools and colleges for all children and young people who have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. This may be:

- help taking part in learning activities;

- a special learning programme;

- extra help from a teacher or assistant;

- working in a smaller group;

- extra encouragement;

- help communicating with other children;

- advice, intervention, support from additional experts;

- support with physical or personal care difficulties, e.g. eating, getting around the building safely or using the toilet.

The parents are formally informed (CoP 6.2). They must be notified that there is independent advice and support for parents (CoP 6.39). For information click here. The formal graduated response of assess, plan, do and review at SEN support now begins. (CoP 6.44- 6.62). The child will be recorded as being at 'K Code' on the school census. It is really important that teaching staff use their 'best endeavours', this means doing everything they can, to meet the needs of the pupil.

Click here for a flowchart of practice and procedures

Moderation

Link to some primary and secondary North Yorkshire case studies

Link to DfE SEN Support case studies

The graduated approach

Please click here for a summary chart of the graduated approach

SEN support should arise from a four part cycle, known as the graduated approach, through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised, leading to a growing understanding of the pupil's needs and of what supports the pupil in making good progress and securing good outcomes. Click here to see the summary of the 7 ingredients for effective SEN support -DfE.

The four stages of the cycle are:

The graduated approach starts at whole-school level. Teachers are continually assessing, planning, implementing and reviewing their approach to teaching all children.

However, where a potential special educational need has been identified, this cyclical process becomes increasingly personalised:

- Individualised assessment leads to a growing understanding of the barriers to and gaps in the pupil's learning.

- Continual reflection on approaches to meeting the pupil's needs leads to a growing understanding of strategies that enable the pupil to make good progress and achieve good outcomes.

In this spiral of support, the graduated approach draws on more personalised approaches, more frequent review and more specialist expertise in successive cycles in order to tailor interventions to meet the particular needs of children and young people.

However too often, for pupils who are identified as having SEN, the temptation is to move straight to the planning stage – writing targets and identifying provision – without spending sufficient time identifying precisely where pupils' gaps in, and barriers to, learning currently lie.

The role of class/subject teachers

The SEND Code of Practice makes it clear that class and/or subject teachers are directly responsible and accountable for all pupils in their class(es), even when pupils are receiving support from a teaching assistant or other specialist staff, within or outside the classroom.

The responsibility and accountability for the progress and development of pupils with SEN lies with the class or subject teacher, not with the SENCo or the learning support department. Reference to the North Yorkshire SEN mainstream guidance would be invaluable at this point.
This is not a new concept. It is firmly embedded in the Teachers' Standards (2012) and the Ofsted framework:

- the child and the family are at the heart of the process;

- the teacher is the professional who is accountable and responsible for the child's progress;

- the SENCO provides professional guidance to colleagues and works closely with parents/carers and with other agencies.

The graduated approach will only secure good outcomes for vulnerable pupils if:

- all those who teach and support pupils with SEN have the highest aspirations for them;

- those who lead and manage provision demonstrate an ambitious vision and plan of action to enable this to happen.

An identification of SEN should not result in excuses for lack of expected progress or a lowering of expectations.

A whole school approach to assessment

Focusing on what is the barrier or what the actual gap in knowledge is will be more useful initially, rather than focusing on what intervention can be put in place

'Without a structured approach to identifying special educational needs, vital evidence is likely to be lost or incomplete and can lead to delays – a frequent complaint of pupils and parents.'
NASEN

In the 'assess' stage of the graduated approach teachers gain a growing understanding of a pupil's needs. A clear understanding of a child's needs is a critical precondition to:

- planning effective teaching;

- determining appropriate provision;

- informing adjustments to teaching that will lead to good progress and improved outcomes for pupils.

Assessment of need starts with a whole school approach that can identify quickly where a child is not making expected progress. Many schools use regular pupil progress meetings to identify this issue. For pupils identified as underachieving, further assessment may indicate the cause of their difficulties and suggest what might need to be done to enable them to get back on track. Discussions initially in these meetings should focus on what are the barriers to learning and what adjustments can be made to in-class teaching that may make a difference.

When a pupil may have SEN and is not making expected progress despite high quality, suitably differentiated teaching, the SEND Code of Practice suggests a range of sources of information that teachers can draw on:

- teacher assessment and knowledge of the pupil;

- data on the pupil's progress, attainment and behaviour;

- the individual's development in comparison with their peers;

- the views and experience of parents;

- the pupil's own views;

- advice from external support services.

Sometimes it will be necessary to use more fine-tuned assessment to explore further the precise gaps in the pupil's learning and development and/or to clarify what the barriers to learning might be. There are several individualised assessment 'tools' and approaches the school can use to support this closer identification of need, such as:

- standardised tests;

- profiling tools, for example for SEMH/behaviour;

- criterion-referenced assessments and checklists;

- observation schedules and prompt sheets.

- questionnaires for parents;

- questionnaires for pupils;

- screening assessments, for example for dyslexia;

- specialist assessments, for example from a speech and language therapist or an educational psychologist.

Click here for guidance about some tools which can be used to assess needs, provide additional and different interventions and show impact, pre-single point of access (SPA)

Click here for a range of checklists

The role of the SENCo within a whole school approach to assessment

The SEND Code of Practice states that in identifying a pupil as needing SEN support, the class or subject teacher, working with the SENCO, should carry out a clear assessment of the pupil's needs.

A key responsibility for the SENCO is establishing a structured and agreed approach to the identification of SEN. It is good practice to:

- use a **record of key concerns**, where teachers who have identified a pupil as not making adequate progress, despite high-quality teaching targeted at their areas of weakness, can record their concerns, observations and any individualised assessments that may have been made. It is important to make a **'short note'** of these concerns in the child's file, see section 6.39 of the SEN CoP;

- make this information available to the professionals involved in the assessment;

- seek and provide further clarification where there is not enough detailed information.

Evidence is key to identifying needs and ensuring that the appropriate provision is provided.

An 'initial concerns checklist' is a tool that can:

- help class and subject teachers to collate summative assessment data, observations and any initial 'individualised' testing they have on a pupil in their class about whom they may have concerns;

- help SENCOs to engage and communicate with teachers in the early stages of gathering information when initial concerns are being raised;

- be used as the basis for considering adaptations to day-to-day teaching, further assessments and observations, and decisions about putting a pupil on the SEN register/ record.

Individual, detailed assessments should be formative, resulting in greater clarity about a pupil's strengths and needs and better targeted approaches to teaching and learning.

It is important to remember that it is teachers (not just the SENCO) who need to know and understand the outcomes of these assessments and to use them to inform adjustments to their day-to-day teaching or to targeted interventions. This is unlikely to happen if such assessment is predominantly identified as needed but is carried out by specialist SEN staff, with the results sitting in a file for reference only. Therefore, assessments at this stage should be easily accessible for all teachers and not specialised. Leave more specialised assessments to the EMS staff or other professionals that may become involved at a later date. There is a list of formative assessments and checklists in the appendix to guide you.

It is teachers (not just the SENCO) who need to know and understand the outcomes of assessments and to use them

Use of Teaching Assistants

Seven Golden Rules

1

Teaching assistants should not be used as substitute teachers for low-attaining pupils

2

Use teaching assistants to add value to what teachers do, not replace them

3

Use teaching assistants to help pupils develop independent study skills and manage their own learning

4

Ensure teaching assistants are fully prepared for their role in the classroom through out of class liaison with teachers

5

Use teaching assistants to deliver high-quality one-to-one and small group support using structured interventions

6

Adopt evidence-based interventions to support teaching assistants in their small group and one-to-one instruction

7

It is important that what students learn from teaching assistants complements what they are being taught in the classroom

Teachers, with guidance and support from the SENCo, may decide to use teaching assistants (TAs) to deliver high quality 1:1 and small group support using structured interventions. This may be because personalised quality first teaching is not accelerating learning enough and the gap is widening. The interventions are often, but not always, delivered by teaching assistants (TAs). The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) makes seven recommendations (see left) about making best use of TAs (EEF, Spring 2015). To read more click here.

Recommendation five and six are specific recommendations on the use of TAs in delivering structured interventions out of class. All research shows that where pupils receive highly structured, time limited interventions with high quality support and training, where fidelity to the programme has been ensured and where explicit connections are made between learning in classrooms and the intervention then pupils can make excellent progress. Pupils usually make an additional 3 to 4 months progress. That is at least double the rate of progress, often referred to as a ratio gain of 2 or more.

Schools should always use structured interventions with a reliable evidence of effectiveness. If school decides to use a 'home-grown' intervention, which is one where there is no independent, reliable and robust evidence of effectiveness, then they must be able to demonstrate that it at least doubles the rate of progress. It is imperative that the impact of all interventions is measured and recorded.

Requesting further support once at least one cycle of assess, plan, do and review has taken place.

Teachers may find the SEND specialist support and provision document useful- click here to access it.

Removing the child or young person from SEN support

In some cases the high quality provision and reasonable adjustments you have made have resulted in the child making good progress and there is a temptation to remove them from SEN support. However, consider whether the child would require a transition plan to take account of these adjustments in order to make a successful move to his next stage/place/class of education. If this is required it would be advisable for the pupil to be placed or remain at SEN support. (This often occurs when the child is identified as having autism or characteristics that may suggest autism or speech, language and communication needs). See case study B

Appendix

Link to assessments and checklists to help with early identification of SEND

Acknowledgements

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