

Learning Support / SEN - Towards a Common Language & Understanding in Schools

1. Umbrella Terms

The terms below are commonly used when talking about Learning Support / SEN provision in schools. The terms have a wide scope in meaning and interpretation, and are often used interchangeably. However, there are some distinctions and a need for accuracy - particularly in formal recording / reporting and day-to-day liaison work with parents, colleagues and other parties not necessarily as knowledgeable in this area. Please find a list below...

Name		Brief Description
1.1	Additional Needs	The main term used within the school for needs presented by students that cannot be met by Universal / Wave 1 / Quality First Teaching approaches.
1.2	Special Educational Needs	A sub-section of Additional Needs referring primarily to the needs presented by students who have a 'Special Needs'. A child has SEN if he/she: "has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special education provision to be made for him or her".

2. Areas of Additional Need

The following terms can be used to break down Additional Needs into identifiable skills / deficit areas to which responses can then be directed.

Name		Brief Description
2.1	Concentration	Concentration Staying on task, ignoring distractions, focusing on the teacher, remembering instructions etc.
2.2	Organisational Skills	Physical organisation of self and equipment, planning ahead with work, thinking about consequences before actions etc.
2.3	Speech and Language	Understanding their first spoken language, acquiring new vocabulary, ability to express themselves clearly in sentences etc.
2.4	Reading	Ability to read with ease and fluency.
2.5	Spelling	Ability to consistently spell common words and make a good attempt at unfamiliar words.
2.6	Extended Writing	Ability to write a correctly punctuated work with ease and fluency.

2.7	Handwriting	Ability to write legibly, with ease and at a pace equivalent to peers.
2.8	English as an Additional Language	Understanding English as a second language, acquiring new vocabulary etc.
2.9	Numeracy/Maths	Demonstrating a basic grasp of number, algebra, data, shape / space and measure etc.
2.10	Physical/Hearing/Visual	Ability to access all activities despite physical, hearing or visual difficulty etc.
2.11	Social	Forming and maintaining positive relationships, conforming to social norms etc.
2.12	Emotional	Showing awareness of own feelings and that of others, managing feelings, confidence etc.

3. Identifiable Types of Difficulties, Conditions and Disability

With persistent additional needs, the following terms, definitions and codes for identifiable types of learning difficulties, conditions and disability are used – these are drawn from guidance. These labels are only assigned following assessment by an Educational Psychologist, Specialist Teacher, Medical Professional or other suitably qualified professional. They do not always mean that a child with a diagnosis has SEN, as a child with SEN has a learning difficulty that: “calls for special education provision to be made for him or her”. A child is considered to have a learning difficulty if he/she:

- has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- has a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post 16 institutions.

	Name	Common Definition	Abbreviation	Census Category
3.1	Specific Learning Difficulties	An umbrella term cover a wide range of identifiable difficulties, usually inherent, that an individual may present with. When these difficulties are clustered together, often more definitive sub-sets are used such as ‘dyslexia’, ‘dyscalculia’, ‘ADHD’ etc.	SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulty – attach note if sub-set has been identified.
3.2	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	A specific learning difficulty typically presenting as exceptionally low concentration span, poor working memory, limited organisational skills with extreme impulsivity.	ADHD / ADD	Specific Learning Difficulty – with note “Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder”

3.3	Attention Deficit Disorder	A specific learning difficulty typically presenting as exceptionally low concentration span, poor working memory, daydreaming / procrastination, and slower thinking through of concepts, questions etc.	ADD	Specific Learning Difficulty – with note “Attention Deficit Disorder”
3.4	Attachment Disorders	A range of difficulties typically affecting mood, adherence to social norms and social relationships arising from a failure to form normal attachments to primary caregivers during early childhood (usually 0-3 years). Also has causative link to incidences of abuse, neglect, sudden separation from / changes in caregivers during early childhood.	Att.	Social, Emotional and Mental Health– with note “Attachment Disorder” (If diagnosed)
3.5	Autistic Spectrum Condition	A psychological condition presenting itself in a variety of forms (Autism, Asperger Syndrome, Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA)...), typically including specific learning difficulties centred around limited empathy, rigid / literal thinking, limited ability to interpret language, limited ability to engage in a variety of social situations / experiences etc.	ASC / ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
3.6	Dyslexia / Dyslexic Tendencies	A specific learning difficulty typically presenting itself in one or more of the main areas of literacy – namely reading and spelling. Students will have difficulties with working memory and often organisational skills. A commonly used indicator is where there is a clear discrepancy between literacy skills and verbal skills / general ability – though students of all ability levels may have dyslexia.	DysL	Specific Learning Difficulty – with note “Dyslexic Tendencies / Dyslexia”
3.7	Dyspraxia	A specific learning difficulty based around the brain’s transmission of signals that control gross and fine motor skills - typically affecting planning of movements and co-	DysP	Specific Learning Difficulty – with note “Dyspraxia”

		ordination. Can also impact on language development and organisation.		
3.8	Dyscalculia	A specific learning difficulty typically presenting itself in one or more of the main areas of Math / numeracy – namely use of symbols, acquiring arithmetical skills particularly those requiring use of working memory, and spatial understanding. On the surface, these often relate to basic concepts such as: telling the time, calculating prices and handling change, and measuring and estimating things.	DysC	Specific Learning Difficulty – with note “Dyscalculia”
3.9	Hearing Impairment	Difficulties based around fully or partially reduced functioning in one or both ear’s ability to detect and/or process sounds. Caused by a wide range of biological and environmental factors, loss of hearing typically arises in young people from a genetic / biological condition or injury to part/s of the ear.	HI	Hearing Impairment
3.10	Moderate Learning Difficulties	Definitions of Moderate Learning Difficulties vary. However, a common understanding is that there must be substantial difficulties (3+ years below standard progress) in two or more of the following areas: literacy, numeracy, speech and language, social skills, memory, concentration - typically in conjunction with an exceptionally low score on an individual test of intelligence and notable low levels of independence in learning.	MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulty
3.11	Oppositional Defiant Disorder	A psychological condition presenting itself as an ongoing pattern of disobedient, hostile, defiant and deliberately subversive behaviour toward authority figures / systems of authority which goes beyond the bounds of normal childhood behaviour. Often linked with ADHD and can	ODD	Social, Emotional and Mental Health – with note “Oppositional Defiant Disorder”

		develop into other more severe conditions such as Conduct Disorder.		
3.12	Physical Difficulty	Difficulties based around a full or partially reduced musculoskeletal functioning in part/s of the body. Caused by a wide range of biological and environmental factors, this type of difficulty typically arises in young people from a genetic / biological condition, a medical condition or a significant injury.	PD	Physical Difficulty
3.13	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	A range of difficulties typically presenting as exceptional limitations in an ability to recognise and manage emotions, be highly anxious, linked in with a persistent inability to engage constructively in a variety of social situations / experiences etc.	SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
3.14	Speech, Language and Communication Needs	A range of specific learning difficulties related to all aspects of communication in children and young people. These can include difficulties with fluency, forming sounds and words, formulating sentences, understanding what others say, and using language for socially and learning.	SLCN	Speech Language or Communication Need
3.15	Visual Impairment	Difficulties based around fully or partially reduced functioning in one or both eye's ability to detect and/or process images. Caused by a wide range of biological and environmental factors, loss of vision typically arises in young people from a genetic / biological condition or injury to part/s of the eye.	VI	Visual Impairment

The following two areas are not classed as a learning difficulty, condition or disability but are a formally identifiable area of need.

3.16	English as an Additional Language	Referring to students who were born in Britain for whom English is not the first language as home and for	EAL	Record as EAL
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		students not born in Britain, having arrived in the country after the acquisition of their first language (typically 5 years old or over).		
3.17	Medical Needs	Refers specifically to students with a medical condition that is permanent / ongoing and is likely to interfere with attendance to school and participation in a full mainstream curriculum.	Med	Other Difficulty / Disability – with a note naming medical condition - If at SEN Support

4. Levels of Response

In line with the SEN Code of Practice, schools are to provide graduated responses to additional needs within the student population. These are briefly described below:

Name		Description	Census Code
4.1	Quality First Teaching Monitoring	Students who are viewed to be at some risk of not making adequate progress – but are currently making adequate progress through Quality First Teaching / Wave 1 responses and are reported to have no immediate foreseeable difficulties. They are monitored closely by teachers and teachers provide support as part of normal lessons.	N/A
4.2	First Concerns	Students who are not making adequate progress but with a mix of Wave 1 and Wave 2 responses are expected to make accelerated progress.	N/A
4.3	SEN Support	Students who are not making adequate progress despite receiving targeted support and access to interventions through First Concerns. These students are receiving specific, personalised intervention due to them having Special Educational Needs identified by the school.	K
4.4	Complex	Students at ‘SEN Support’ who require provision that costs more than £6,000 per year to implement. The involvement of external professionals and advice givers is implemented in order for the child to continue to make progress. The school should consider applying for an EHCP Needs	K

		Assessment to identify possible needs and suggested provision, and have access to Top-Up Funding provided by the Local Authority.	
4.5	Complex (EHCP)	Students who have a Final EHCP issued by the Local Authority. The EHCP outlines the Needs that a child has, the aspirational Outcomes the child should be working towards and the Provision required for these Needs to be met.	E
4.6	Specialist (EHCP)	Students who have an EHCP which needs to be implemented in a specialist setting due to the highly complex Needs identified in the plan.	E

The graduated response detailed above broadly mirrors the model outlined below. Therefore sometimes these terms are used interchangeably.

Wave 1 – Universal / Quality First Teaching	School-based approaches designed for the benefit of all students
Wave 2 – Targeted Intervention / First Concerns	Additional school-based approaches for small groups of students
Wave 3 – Personalised / SEND Support	Additional school-based and external agency approaches for individual students with SEN.

5. Core Practices and Processes

There are a number of core practices and processes that are undertaken in order to identify, respond to and review additional and special educational needs within schools.

Practice/Process		Description
5.1	Access Arrangements	Additional support for students sitting SATs at Key Stage 2.
5.2	Additional Needs Register	A document holding information on all students identified as having additional needs.

5.3	Annual Review	A legally-binding yearly review of needs and support arrangements for a student with an EHCP. Involves written reports and a meeting between all relevant parties.
5.4	Common Assessment Framework (CAF)	An assessment process, through completion of a CAF form, used by the school when referring to external agencies and designed to be used across the childcare workforce throughout England.
5.5	Health Care Plan	A document holding information on a student's medical needs with advice on responses where necessary, written and coordinated by Health Professionals.
5.6	In-class Support	Strategies and additional staffing put in place to ensure the inclusion and achievement of a student or group of students in the mainstream classroom.
5.7	SEND Support Plan	A document to plan and record actions being undertaken to meet the additional needs of a student. For children at SEN Support and above this is a SEN Support Plan. For children at First Concerns a First Concerns Profile is drawn up. All children are monitored formally on a termly basis.
5.8	Internal Reports	Any reports completed by teachers / support staff to inform an Annual Review.
5.9	Intervention	Small group or individual programmes of study for students with identified additional needs
5.10	Liaison	Any work undertaken that involves communication and collaboration with parents/carers, colleagues and external agencies to ensure the inclusion and achievement of a student or group of students with additional needs.
5.11	Personal Educational Plan (PEP)	A document to plan and record actions being undertaken to ensure the well-being and progress of students registered as 'Child in Care' / 'Looked-after Child' where the Local Authority is the legal parent.
5.12	Standardised Test	A test of a skill area measured against established norms / averages for that age group. A standardised test will typically lead to a 'standardised score', 'age equivalent score' and a 'percentile rank' which can inform psychological / educational reports.
5.13	Statutory Assessment (Needs Assessment)	Assessment of a student's needs undertaken by the school, educational psychologist and Local Authority to determine whether an EHCP is required.
5.14	Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	A document outlining legally-binding provision to be implemented by the school and other agencies in support of a young person. The Local Authority must ensure that Section F (Provision) is available to meet Section B (Needs) in Section I (a named Setting).