

SEN

Special
Educational
Needs

Information for Parents and Carers

learning
communication
inclusion
progress
potential
provision
achievement
school action

teacher
review

success
differentiation
SENCO
curriculum
school action plus
classroom support
assessment
behaviour
classroom assistant
additional help
small group teaching
class
school
targets

learning strategies
individual education plan



*Key principles

- ✓ All children with special needs should have their needs met
- ✓ The special educational needs of children are normally met in mainstream early education settings or schools
- ✓ Your views should be taken into account and the wishes of your child should be listened to
- ✓ You have a vital role in supporting your child's education
- ✓ Children with special educational needs should get a broad well-balanced and relevant education including the foundation stage curriculum (for children aged 3 to 5) or the National Curriculum (for children aged 5 to 16).

**Extract from Special Educational Needs (SEN) a guide for parents and carers published by DfES.*

The information in this booklet relates to the 1996 Education Act, the SEN and Disability Act 2001 and the 2001 Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. The Code of Practice provides practical guidance for us – the local education authority (LEA) – and our schools on our responsibilities towards children with special educational needs.

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Introduction

Welcome to our booklet for parents and carers on special educational needs. Our aim is to help you to:

- ✓ **understand what special educational needs are**
- ✓ **understand what schools, the local education authority (LEA) and other professionals can do to help your child**
- ✓ **play a full part in your child's special education and explain how you can get involved so that your views are heard**
- ✓ **understand what rights you have as a parent or carer**

East Sussex Local Education Authority (LEA) is committed to including as many children as possible within a mainstream education setting. Most children with special educational needs will go to their local school and as far as possible they are educated with other children of the same age. The LEA's goal is to create inclusive schools so that all children and

young people have equal access to their community school and specialist provision.

We believe that all children with special educational needs have a right to a broad and well balanced mainstream education which should follow as far as possible the National Curriculum. The LEA's aim is to raise expectations and achievement for pupils and young people with special educational needs.

What does SEN mean?

SEN stands for 'special educational needs'. It means your child has difficulty learning.

Your child may have difficulties in one or more of these areas:

- ✓ **learning (eg reading or maths)**
- ✓ **communication**
- ✓ **behaviour**
- ✓ **sensory or physical needs**

So what are special educational needs?

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty. A learning difficulty means that a child finds it harder to learn than most children of the same age, or a child has a disability which makes it difficult to use the normal educational facilities in local schools. Some children may need extra help because of a range of needs, such as in thinking and understanding, physical or sensory difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties, or difficulties with speech

and language or how they relate to and behave with other people. Some children may have learning difficulties from a very early age, while others may develop learning difficulties at some time in their school life.

Children with learning difficulties will need some additional help if they are not making enough progress. If this is the case then a school will take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively.



What should I do if I think my child has special educational needs?

If you are concerned that your child may have difficulties with learning it is important to speak to someone as soon as possible as parents are often the first to notice any difficulties. If your child has not yet started school you could speak to your doctor, health visitor, the SENCO (the teacher in the early years setting/school who has special responsibility for children with special educational needs) or the Early Years SEN Service.

Once your child attends school your first point of contact will be with your child's class teacher. You can also talk to the headteacher or the SENCO.

You can also contact the Parent Link helpline on 01273 481172 to discuss your concerns and they can give you information, support and advice. Parent Link provides support and advice to parents and carers.



The Early Years

What special help is available for very young children?

Once a child aged 3-5 years has been identified as having special educational needs an individual programme will be drawn up and help will be provided. This is known as Early Years Action or Early Years Action Plus.

Early Years Action Plus

A child who continues to make little or no progress in specific areas over a long period will move to the Early Years Action Plus stage. At this stage the nursery/playgroup/or school will ask for help from external support services. More specialist assessments may be requested and advice sought on the use of new or specialist strategies or materials.

At both these stages your views are important. There will be regular consultation with you.

Early Years Action

At the Action stage the Early Years staff will provide activities which are additional to or different from those usually provided. These will be set out in the Individual Educational Plan (IEP). The Action stage should enable the very young child with SEN to learn and progress.

Who will be involved with my child?

- ✓ You – the parent/carer
 - ✓ Class teacher or teachers
 - ✓ Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)
- Others may be involved depending on need:
- ✓ Teaching assistants (learning support assistants or classroom assistants)
 - ✓ Specialists such as an educational psychologist, speech & language therapist, literacy teacher
 - ✓ The LEA if your child needs a statement or has a statement

At School

All pupils do not make progress at the same rate and schools will be involved in the ongoing review of the progress of all pupils. When a pupil has special educational needs teachers will undertake additional assessment, planning and review

action and will be flexible and responsive in putting into place strategies that can meet the pupil's learning needs. Interventions to meet special educational needs will be progressively more powerful in order to meet increasing need.

What special provision is available in primary and secondary schools?

Most pupils in school have their special educational needs met through School Action & School Action Plus interventions. These follow a similar pattern in both the primary and secondary school. The school provides additional support

which may take a variety of forms depending on the needs of the pupil. It will look to make full use of all available classroom and school resources. All support will be planned to help a child make progress.

School Action

At the School Action stage teachers identify pupils who are not making adequate progress. They plan interventions that are additional to or different from those provided as part of the school's usual curriculum. Each pupil will have an individual educational plan (see page 10).

At the primary level the class teacher remains responsible for working with the pupil on a daily basis and for planning and delivering an individualised programme of learning.

At the secondary level form tutors, subject teachers, year heads and pastoral teachers would be involved in planning the learning programme. The subject teachers remain responsible for teaching the child and delivering the individualised programme of learning .

The SENCO may take the lead in planning future strategies for pupils with SEN in discussion with colleagues and in monitoring and reviewing action.

School Action Plus

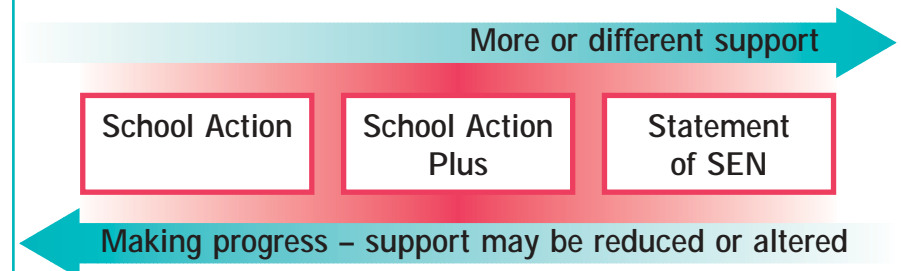
On occasions when a pupil makes insufficient progress over time the pupil will move to the School Action Plus stage. Schools can ask for help from the appropriate support services (see page 13) and the teachers and the SENCO will then receive advice or support from these specialists. Additional or different strategies to those at School Action are put in place and the pupil's individual education plan will be updated.

At Action and Action Plus the school will therefore be involved in:

- ✓ reviewing progress regularly, planning strategies and programmes of learning, and assessing capabilities. Assessment may be ongoing by the class or subject teacher or it may involve more detailed tests.
- ✓ changing teaching strategies and making them responsive to individual pupil's needs.

- ✓ using grouping strategies within the classroom to help pupils make progress. Groups may work under the supervision of the teacher, or with another adult or the teacher for part of the time.
- ✓ using additional support in the classroom. Help in the classroom can come from a wide variety of sources, including adult helpers, parents and teaching assistants. It can also mean using specialist help or advice from specialist teachers, educational psychologists and others with specialist expertise.

The aim of these interventions is to match the special educational provision to the pupil's needs and is part of the cycle of planning, action and review which goes on within school to enable all children to learn and progress.



Beyond Action and Action Plus

What happens if my child needs more help than can be provided by the Action and Action Plus stages?

The majority of children will receive the help they need at the Action and Action Plus stages. For a very few pupils with the most complex, significant and long term needs the help given by schools through Action Plus may not be sufficient to enable the pupil to make adequate progress.

If your child needs more support the school will discuss this with you and with any support services already involved with your child, in order to consider whether to ask the LEA to carry out a statutory assessment.

Where strategies have been in place as part of School Action and School Action Plus for a reasonable period of time and if there is continued concern about progress then a referral by the school may be appropriate. Parents may also ask the LEA to carry out a statutory assessment.

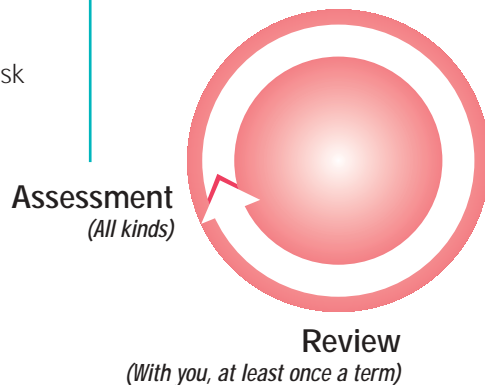
The LEA will consider evidence from the school about the support already provided and decide whether to carry out a statutory assessment.

If the decision is made to carry out a statutory assessment detailed information is collected about your child in order to help the LEA to decide whether a statement of special educational needs should be written. A statement will set out your child's educational needs, and the provision your child needs in order to make progress at school.

Information on the statutory assessment process is available in the booklet 'Assessment and the Statement'.

Continual Assessment

Planning
(Individual Education Plan)



A note on funding

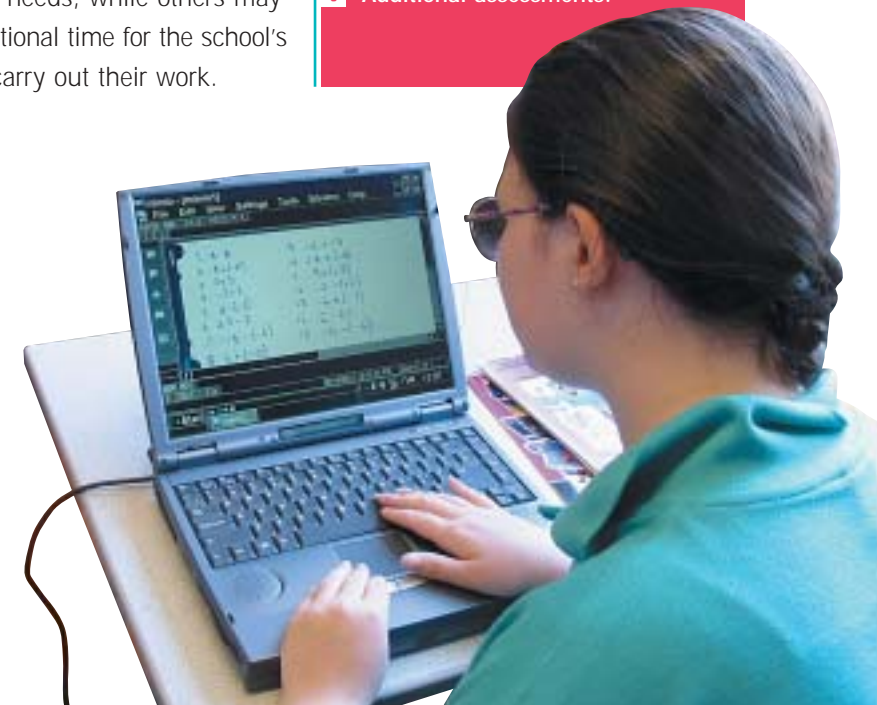
Maintained schools in East Sussex receive funding directly to support pupils with special educational needs who are at the Action or Action Plus stages. Schools receive money according to the number of pupils and the general level of need within the school. The school governors will include a description of how this is spent in their annual report to parents.

It is up to each school to decide how to spend their allocation for special educational needs. Some schools may choose to appoint additional teaching or non-teaching staff to support pupils with special educational needs, while others may pay for additional time for the school's SENCO to carry out their work.

How will the school help my child?

This depends on your child's needs or difficulties and whether your child is making progress and may include:

- ✓ Changing the way your child is taught – this is called differentiation
- ✓ Teaching in small groups for some of the time
- ✓ Support from a classroom assistant or specialist teacher
- ✓ Frequent reviews of progress
- ✓ Additional assessments.



For pupils who have a statement of special educational needs the school will receive an additional sum of money according to the needs of the

child. However, the school will have the flexibility to decide how best to use the additional funds to meet the child's special educational needs.

The Individual Education Plan (IEP)

The majority of pupils with special educational needs at the Action, Action Plus stages and those with a statement will have an IEP. The IEP is written by the school and records the key short term targets and strategies for your child that are different from or additional to those in place from the rest of the group or class.

The aim of the IEP is to promote effective learning. It is a teaching and learning plan. It sets out:

- ✓ **what should be taught**
- ✓ **how it should be taught and**
- ✓ **how often**

Individual Education Plan (IEP) Shows:

- ✓ **Targets –**
what your child is aiming for
- ✓ **Provision –**
the help your child will get
- ✓ **Outcomes –**
how well your child has done

The IEP should include information about:

- ✓ **the short-term targets**
- ✓ **the teaching methods to be used**
- ✓ **the provision to be put in place**
- ✓ **how the school will know whether the IEP is working**

The IEP will be reviewed regularly and you will be able to contribute to the review.

How you can help your child



Parents have a vital role in their child's education. To help the school work effectively with your child you should:

- ✓ **Communicate regularly with your child's teachers in order to share information about your child and alert them to any concerns you have about your child's learning.**

- ✓ **Support your child through fulfilling your obligations under the school's home-school agreement.**

If you have concerns you can also talk to the school SENCO and Parent Link.

Listening to your child

The LEA is committed to involving pupils in their education. This means listening to pupils' views and providing opportunities for pupils to be involved in decision making in ways to suit their age and ability.

Schools are encouraged to provide pupils with information and help pupils to work towards:

- ✓ understanding the importance of information
- ✓ expressing their feelings
- ✓ participating in discussions
- ✓ indicating their choices.

Your child should have the opportunity to be involved in:

- ✓ setting learning targets and contributing to IEPs
- ✓ contributing to the assessment of their needs
- ✓ meetings to discuss their progress
- ✓ discussions about choices of schools

Questions or worries?

You can talk to:

- ✓ Your child's teacher
- ✓ The special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) at school
- ✓ or Parent Link (01273 481172)



Support Services

The LEA has a range of support services aimed at supporting pupils with special or additional education needs and their teachers in school.

These include

County Psychological Service: plays an important role in assessing pupils' educational needs, advising on the provision needed and supporting schools.

Learning Support Service: supports schools, pupils with severe specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) and literacy difficulties. Provides advice, support and training for teachers and teaching assistants plus direct short-term intervention for some pupils in primary school.

Behaviour and Emotional Support Team: supports pupils who are experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties. Supports teachers in mainstream schools by providing a consultation service and training.

Service for Children with Sensory Needs: supports children with hearing impairment and/or visual impairment from the time these impairments are identified and through their school lives. There are Hearing Support Facilities for the children with the most severe hearing impairments in some mainstream primary and secondary schools.

Speech, Language and Communication Service: supports children with speech & language delay, impairments or disorders and those with features of ASD, in Units and Facilities attached to mainstream schools. Provides advice, support and training to teachers and teaching assistants, and short term in school support for some pupils.

Early Years Service SEN: supports pre-school children with severe special educational needs at home, in playgroups or nurseries. It helps to ensure a smooth transition into school.

East Sussex Parent Partnership

The Parent Partnership provides a service for parents and carers to enable them to play an active and informed role in their child's education. The parent partnership service can support you by providing neutral and accurate information, support and assistance.

The Parent Link telephone helpline, which is part of the Parent Partnership service, can provide advice and information, and may be able to put you in touch with a local volunteer who can:

- ✓ **Answer questions about your child's education**
- ✓ **Help you put across your views**
- ✓ **Help you fill out forms and help you write letters about your child**
- ✓ **Help you prepare for meetings and go with you if you wish**
- ✓ **Tell you about your child's rights and your rights as a parent**
- ✓ **Listen to how you feel**



Definitions

Curriculum

The curriculum is the learning opportunities the school offers.

DfES

Department for Education and Skills.

(IEP)

Individual Education Plan.

A plan which sets out short term targets and how the targets will be met.

Local Education Authority (LEA)

A local government body that is responsible for providing education.

Mainstream School

A school which is for all children.

Maintained School

A state school.

National Curriculum

The national curriculum is set for all children. It is taught in a way that meets the needs of individual pupils.

Special Educational Needs

Co-ordinator (SENCO)

The teacher in school who has special responsibility for children with special educational needs.

Special educational provision.

The special help given to children with special educational needs.

Statement of special educational needs

A document that sets out a child's needs and all the extra help they should get.

Statutory assessment.

A very detailed examination of a child's special educational needs.

It may lead to a statement.

Contacts

At school: You can talk to the class teacher, the SENCO & the Headteacher. However, it may be advisable to make an appointment so the person you wish to see can set aside some time for a meeting.

To talk to the SEN team contact:

SEN Team
PO Box 4
County Hall
St Anne's Crescent
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 1SG
Tel: 01273 481000

To talk to Parent Link contact:

Parent Link
Helpline 01273 481172
Email:
parentlink@eastsussexcc.gov.uk

Or write to Parent link at

PO Box 4
County Hall
St Anne's Crescent
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 1SG

To talk to the Early Years Service SEN contact:

Early Years Service SEN
St Mary's House. 4th Floor.
52 St. Leonards Road
Eastbourne
BN21 3UU
Tel: 01323 747490



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