

6 Schools

What this chapter covers

This chapter applies mostly to mainstream schools. The Equality Act duties described under 'Equality and inclusion' and the duty to publish an SEN information report under 'Publishing information: SEN information report' apply to special schools, as do schools' duties in respect of EHC needs assessments and plans (Chapter 9 – Education, Health and Care needs assessments and plans). The chapter explains the action that mainstream schools should take to meet their duties in relation to identifying and supporting all children with special educational needs (SEN) whether or not they have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

Relevant legislation

Primary

The following sections of the Children and Families Act 2014:

- Co-operating generally: governing body functions: Section 29
- Children and young people with special educational needs but no EHC plan: Section 29
- Children with SEN in maintained nurseries and mainstream schools: Section 35
- Using best endeavours to secure special educational provision: Section 66
- SEN co-ordinators: Section 67
- Informing parents and young people: Section 68
- SEN information report: Section 69
- Duty to support pupils with medical conditions: Section 100

The Equality Act 2010

Regulations

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014

Improving outcomes: high aspirations and expectations for children and young people with SEN

- 6.1 All children and young people are entitled to an appropriate education, one that is appropriate to their needs, promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential. This should enable them to:
- achieve their best
 - become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and
 - make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training
- 6.2 Every school is required to identify and address the SEN of the pupils that they support. Mainstream schools, which in this chapter includes maintained schools and academies that are not special schools, maintained nursery schools, 16 to 19 academies, alternative provision academies and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), **must**:
- use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEN gets the support they need – this means doing everything they can to meet children and young people’s SEN
 - ensure that children and young people with SEN engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils who do not have SEN
 - designate a teacher to be responsible for co-ordinating SEN provision – the SEN co-ordinator, or SENCO (this does not apply to 16 to 19 academies)
 - inform parents when they are making special educational provision for a child
 - prepare an SEN information report (see ‘Publishing information: SEN information report’, paragraph 6.78 onwards) and their arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps being taken to prevent disabled children from being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to enable access to the school for disabled children and their accessibility plan showing how they plan to improve access progressively over time
- 6.3 There should be a member of the governing body or a sub-committee with specific oversight of the school’s arrangements for SEN and disability. School leaders should regularly review how expertise and resources used to address SEN can be used to build the quality of whole-school provision as part of their approach to school improvement.

- 6.4 The quality of teaching for pupils with SEN, and the progress made by pupils, should be a core part of the school's performance management arrangements and its approach to professional development for all teaching and support staff. School leaders and teaching staff, including the SENCO, should identify any patterns in the identification of SEN, both within the school and in comparison with national data, and use these to reflect on and reinforce the quality of teaching. Many aspects of this whole school approach have been piloted by Achievement for All – for further details and links to other sources of training and support materials, see Annex 2: Improving practice and staff training in education settings.
- 6.5 The identification of SEN should be built into the overall approach to monitoring the progress and development of all pupils.
- 6.6 A mainstream school's arrangements for assessing and identifying pupils as having SEN should be agreed and set out as part of the Local Offer. A school should publish its arrangements as part of the information it makes available on SEN (see the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014).
- 6.7 In fulfilling these duties schools should have regard to the principles set out in Chapter 1. In particular, they should ensure that children, parents and young people are actively involved in decision-making throughout the approaches set out in this chapter.

Equality and inclusion

- 6.8 Schools support pupils with a wide range of SEN. They should regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the support they offer or can access. Schools **must** co-operate with the local authority in reviewing the provision that is available locally (Chapter 3) and in developing the Local Offer (Chapter 4). Schools should also collaborate with other local education providers to explore how different needs can be met most effectively. They **must** have due regard to general duties to promote disability equality.
- 6.9 All schools have duties under the Equality Act 2010 towards individual disabled children and young people. They **must** make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services for disabled children, to prevent them being put at a substantial disadvantage. These duties are anticipatory – they require thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage. Schools also have wider duties to prevent discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations.

- 6.10 Further duties are referred to in the Introduction. The guidance in this chapter should be read in the light of the principle in Chapter 1 which focuses on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning.

Medical conditions

- 6.11 The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on maintained schools and academies to make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions. Individual healthcare plans will normally specify the type and level of support required to meet the medical needs of such pupils. Where children and young people also have SEN, their provision should be planned and delivered in a co-ordinated way with the healthcare plan. Schools are required to have regard to statutory guidance '*Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions*' (see the References section under Introduction for a link).

Curriculum

- 6.12 All pupils should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. The National Curriculum Inclusion Statement states that teachers should set high expectations for every pupil, whatever their prior attainment. Teachers should use appropriate assessment to set targets which are deliberately ambitious. Potential areas of difficulty should be identified and addressed at the outset. Lessons should be planned to address potential areas of difficulty and to remove barriers to pupil achievement. In many cases, such planning will mean that pupils with SEN and disabilities will be able to study the full national curriculum.

Careers guidance for children and young people

- 6.13 Maintained schools and PRUs must ensure that pupils from Year 8 until Year 13 are provided with independent careers guidance. Academies are subject to this duty through their funding agreements. Chapter 8 provides more information about careers guidance for children and young people.

Identifying SEN in schools

- 6.14 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.
- 6.15 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. Making higher quality teaching normally available to the whole class is likely to mean that fewer pupils will require such

support. Such improvements in whole-class provision tend to be more cost effective and sustainable.

- 6.16 Schools should assess each pupil's current skills and levels of attainment on entry, building on information from previous settings and key stages where appropriate. At the same time, schools should consider evidence that a pupil may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 and, if so, what reasonable adjustments may need to be made for them.
- 6.17 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
- 6.18 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.
- 6.19 The first response to such progress should be high quality teaching targeted at their areas of weakness. Where progress continues to be less than expected the class or subject teacher, working with the SENCO, should assess whether the child has SEN. While informally gathering evidence (including the views of the pupil and their parents) schools should not delay in putting in place 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.
- 6.20 For some children, SEN can be identified at an early age. However, for other children and young people difficulties become evident only as they develop. All those who work with children and young people should be alert to emerging difficulties and respond early. In particular, parents know their children best and it is important that all professionals listen and understand when parents express concerns about their child's development. They should also listen to and address any concerns raised by children and young people themselves.

- 6.21 Persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours do not necessarily mean that a child or young person has SEN. Where there are concerns, there should be an assessment to determine whether there are any causal factors such as undiagnosed learning difficulties, difficulties with communication or mental health issues. If it is thought housing, family or other domestic circumstances may be contributing to the presenting behaviour a multi-agency approach, supported by the use of approaches such as the Early Help Assessment, may be appropriate. In all cases, early identification and intervention can significantly reduce the use of more costly intervention at a later stage.
- 6.22 Professionals should also be alert to other events that can lead to learning difficulties or wider mental health difficulties, such as bullying or bereavement. Such events will not always lead to children having SEN but it can have an impact on wellbeing and sometimes this can be severe. Schools should ensure they make appropriate provision for a child's short-term needs in order to prevent problems escalating. Where there are long-lasting difficulties schools should consider whether the child might have SEN. Further guidance on dealing with bullying issues can be found on the GOV.UK website – a link is given in the References section under Chapter 6.
- 6.23 Slow progress and low attainment do not necessarily mean that a child has SEN and should not automatically lead to a pupil being recorded as having SEN. However, they may be an indicator of a range of learning difficulties or disabilities. Equally, it should not be assumed that attainment in line with chronological age means that there is no learning difficulty or disability. Some learning difficulties and disabilities occur across the range of cognitive ability and, left unaddressed may lead to frustration, which may manifest itself as disaffection, emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- 6.24 Identifying and assessing SEN for children or young people whose first language is not English requires particular care. Schools should look carefully at all aspects of a child or young person's performance in different areas of learning and development or subjects to establish whether lack of progress is due to limitations in their command of English or if it arises from SEN or a disability. Difficulties related solely to limitations in English as an additional language are not SEN.
- 6.25 When reviewing and managing special educational provision the broad areas of need and support outlined from 6.28 below may be helpful, and schools should review how well equipped they are to provide support across these areas. Information on these areas of need and support is also collected through the School Census and forms part of the statutory publication '*Children and Young People with SEN: an analysis*' which is issued by DfE each year.

- 6.26 There is a wide range of information available on appropriate interventions for pupils with different types of need, and associated training which schools can use to ensure they have the necessary knowledge and expertise to use them. See the References section under Chapter 6 for links to organisations that provide this information.
- 6.27 These four broad areas give an overview of the range of needs that should be planned for. The purpose of identification is to work out what action the school needs to take, not to fit a pupil into a category. In practice, individual children or young people often have needs that cut across all these areas and their needs may change over time. For instance speech, language and communication needs can also be a feature of a number of other areas of SEN, and children and young people with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) may have needs across all areas, including particular sensory requirements. A detailed assessment of need should ensure that the full range of an individual's needs is identified, not simply the primary need. The support provided to an individual should always be based on a full understanding of their particular strengths and needs and seek to address them all using well-evidenced interventions targeted at their areas of difficulty and where necessary specialist equipment or software.

Broad areas of need

Communication and interaction

- 6.28 Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. The profile for every child with SLCN is different and their needs may change over time. They may have difficulty with one, some or all of the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives.
- 6.29 Children and young people with ASD, including Asperger's Syndrome and Autism, are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction. They may also experience difficulties with language, communication and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others.

Cognition and learning

- 6.30 Support for learning difficulties may be required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation. Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and associated difficulties with mobility and communication, through to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), where

children are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment.

- 6.31 Specific learning difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

Social, emotional and mental health difficulties

- 6.32 Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.
- 6.33 Schools and colleges should have clear processes to support children and young people, including how they will manage the effect of any disruptive behaviour so it does not adversely affect other pupils. The Department for Education publishes guidance on managing pupils' mental health and behaviour difficulties in schools – see the References section under Chapter 6 for a link.

Sensory and/or physical needs

- 6.34 Some children and young people require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time. Many children and young people with vision impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) will require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning, or habilitation support. Children and young people with an MSI have a combination of vision and hearing difficulties. Information on how to provide services for deafblind children and young people is available through the Social Care for Deafblind Children and Adults guidance published by the Department of Health (see the References section under Chapter 6 for a link).
- 6.35 Some children and young people with a physical disability (PD) require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

Special educational provision in schools

- 6.36 Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff.
- 6.37 High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching. Schools should regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching for all pupils, including those at risk of underachievement. This includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving, teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils and their knowledge of the SEN most frequently encountered.
- 6.38 In deciding whether to make special educational provision, the teacher and SENCO should consider all of the information gathered from within the school about the pupil's progress, alongside national data and expectations of progress. This should include high quality and accurate formative assessment, using effective tools and early assessment materials. For higher levels of need, schools should have arrangements in place to draw on more specialised assessments from external agencies and professionals.
- 6.39 This information gathering should include an early discussion with the pupil and their parents. These early discussions with parents should be structured in such a way that they develop a good understanding of the pupil's areas of strength and difficulty, the parents' concerns, the agreed outcomes sought for the child and the next steps. A short note of these early discussions should be added to the pupil's record on the school information system and given to the parents. Schools should also tell children, parents and young people about the local authority's Information, Advice and Support Service.
- 6.40 Consideration of whether special educational provision is required should start with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment and the views and wishes of the pupil and their parents. This should then help determine the support that is needed and whether it can be provided by adapting the school's core offer or whether something different or additional is required.
- 6.41 More detailed information on what constitutes good outcome setting is given in Chapter 9, Education, Health and Care needs assessments and plans (paragraphs 9.64 to 9.69). These principles should be applied to planning for all children and young people with SEN. From Year 9 onwards, the nature of the outcomes will reflect the need to ensure young people are preparing for adulthood.

- 6.42 The outcomes considered should include those needed to make successful transitions between phases of education and to prepare for adult life. Schools should engage with secondary schools or FE providers as necessary to help plan for these transitions (see Chapter 8, Preparing for adulthood from the earliest years). The agreed actions may also include those taken to make sure the school meets its duty to ensure that pupils with SEN engage in school activities together with those who do not have SEN.
- 6.43 However support is provided, a clear date for reviewing progress should be agreed and the parent, pupil and teaching staff should each be clear about how they will help the pupil reach the expected outcomes. The overriding purpose of this early action is to help the pupil achieve the identified outcomes and remove any barriers to learning. Where it is decided that a pupil does have SEN, the decision should be recorded in the school records and the pupil's parents **must** be formally informed that special educational provision is being made. Arrangements for appropriate support should be made through the school's approach to SEN support.

SEN support in schools

- 6.44 Where a pupil is identified as having SEN, 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 through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the pupil's needs and of what supports the pupil in making good progress and securing good outcomes. This is known as the graduated approach. It draws on more detailed approaches, more frequent review and more specialist expertise in successive cycles in order to match interventions to the SEN of children and young people.

Assess

- 6.45 In identifying a child as needing SEN support the class or subject teacher, working with the SENCO, should carry out a clear analysis of the pupil's needs. This should draw on the teacher's assessment and experience of the pupil, their previous progress and attainment, as well as information from the school's core approach to pupil progress, attainment, and behaviour. It should also draw on other subject teachers' assessments where relevant, the individual's development in comparison to their peers and national data, the views and experience of parents, the pupil's own views and, if relevant, advice from external support services. Schools should take seriously any concerns raised by a parent. These should be recorded and compared to the setting's own assessment and information on how the pupil is developing.
- 6.46 This assessment should be reviewed regularly. This will help ensure that support and intervention are matched to need, barriers to learning are identified and overcome, and that a clear picture of the interventions put in place and their effect is

developed. For some types of SEN, the way in which a pupil responds to an intervention can be the most reliable method of developing a more accurate picture of need.

- 6.47 In some cases, outside professionals from health or social services may already be involved with the child. These professionals should liaise with the school to help inform the assessments. Where professionals are not already working with school staff the SENCO should contact them if the parents agree.

Plan

- 6.48 Where it is decided to provide a pupil with SEN support, the parents **must** be formally notified, although parents should have already been involved in forming the assessment of needs as outlined above. The teacher and the SENCO should agree in consultation with the parent and the pupil the adjustments, interventions and support to be put in place, as well as the expected impact on progress, development or behaviour, along with a clear date for review.
- 6.49 All teachers and support staff who work with the pupil should be made aware of their needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches that are required. This should also be recorded on the school's information system.
- 6.50 The support and intervention provided should be selected to meet the outcomes identified for the pupil, based on reliable evidence of effectiveness, and should be provided by staff with sufficient skills and knowledge.
- 6.51 Parents should be fully aware of the planned support and interventions and, where appropriate, plans should seek parental involvement to reinforce or contribute to progress at home. The information set out in 6.39 should be readily available to and discussed with the pupil's parents.

Do

- 6.52 The class or subject teacher should remain responsible for working with the child on a daily basis. Where the interventions involve group or one-to-one teaching away from the main class or subject teacher, they should still retain responsibility for the pupil. They should work closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff involved, to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching. The SENCO should support the class or subject teacher in the further assessment of the child's particular strengths and weaknesses, in problem solving and advising on the effective implementation of support.

Review

- 6.53 The effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the pupil's progress should be reviewed in line with the agreed date.
- 6.54 The impact and quality of the support and interventions should be evaluated, along with the views of the pupil and their parents. This should feed back into the analysis of the pupil's needs. The class or subject teacher, working with the SENCO, should revise the support in light of the pupil's progress and development, deciding on any changes to the support and outcomes in consultation with the parent and pupil.
- 6.55 Parents should have clear information about the impact of the support and interventions provided, enabling them to be involved in planning next steps.
- 6.56 Where a pupil has an EHC plan, the local authority **must** review that plan as a minimum every twelve months. Schools **must** co-operate with the local authority in the review process and, as part of the review, the local authority can require schools to convene and hold annual review meetings on its behalf. Further information about EHC plan reviews is given in Chapter 9, Education, Health and Care needs assessments and plans.

Transition

- 6.57 SEN support should include planning and preparation for the transitions between phases of education and preparation for adult life (see Chapter 8, Preparing for adulthood from the earliest years). To support transition, the school should share information with the school, college or other setting the child or young person is moving to. Schools should agree with parents and pupils the information to be shared as part of this planning process. Where a pupil is remaining at the school for post-16 provision, this planning and preparation should include consideration of how to provide a high quality study programme, as set out in paragraph 8.32.

Involving specialists

- 6.58 Where a pupil continues to make less than expected progress, despite evidence-based support and interventions that are matched to the pupil's area of need, the school should consider involving specialists, including those secured by the school itself or from outside agencies.
- 6.59 Schools may involve specialists at any point to advise them on early identification of SEN and effective support and interventions. A school should **always** involve a specialist where a pupil continues to make little or no progress or where they continue to work at levels substantially below those expected of pupils of a similar age despite evidence-based SEN support delivered by appropriately trained staff. The pupil's parents should **always** be involved in any decision to involve specialists.

The involvement of specialists and what was discussed or agreed should be recorded and shared with the parents and teaching staff supporting the child in the same way as other SEN support.

- 6.60 Where assessment indicates that support from specialist services is required, it is important that children and young people receive it as quickly as possible. Joint commissioning arrangements should seek to ensure that there are sufficient services to meet the likely need in an area. The Local Offer should set out clearly what support is available from different services and how it may be accessed.
- 6.61 Schools should work closely with the local authority and other providers to agree the range of local services and clear arrangements for making appropriate requests. This might include schools commissioning specialist services directly. Such specialist services include, but are not limited to:
- educational psychologists
 - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
 - specialist teachers or support services, including specialist teachers with a mandatory qualification for children with hearing and vision impairment, including multi-sensory impairment, and for those with a physical disability. (Those teaching classes of children with sensory impairment **must** hold an appropriate qualification approved by the Secretary of State. Teachers working in an advisory role to support such pupils should also hold the appropriate qualification.)
 - therapists (including speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists)
- 6.62 The SENCO and class teacher, together with the specialists, and involving the pupil's parents, should consider a range of evidence-based and effective teaching approaches, appropriate equipment, strategies and interventions in order to support the child's progress. They should agree the outcomes to be achieved through the support, including a date by which progress will be reviewed.

Requesting an Education, Health and Care needs assessment

- 6.63 SEN support should be adapted or replaced depending on how effective it has been in achieving the agreed outcomes. Where, despite the school having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEN of the child or young person, the child or young person has not made expected progress, the school or parents should consider requesting an Education, Health and Care needs

assessment (see Chapter 9). To inform its decision the local authority will expect to see evidence of the action taken by the school as part of SEN support.

Involving parents and pupils in planning and reviewing progress

- 6.64 Schools **must** provide an annual report for parents on their child's progress. Most schools will want to go beyond this and provide regular reports for parents on how their child is progressing.
- 6.65 Where a pupil is receiving SEN support, schools should talk to parents regularly to set clear outcomes and review progress towards them, discuss the activities and support that will help achieve them, and identify the responsibilities of the parent, the pupil and the school. Schools should meet parents at least three times each year.
- 6.66 These discussions can build confidence in the actions being taken by the school, but they can also strengthen the impact of SEN support by increasing parental engagement in the approaches and teaching strategies that are being used. Finally, they can provide essential information on the impact of SEN support outside school and any changes in the pupil's needs.
- 6.67 These discussions should be led by a teacher with good knowledge and understanding of the pupil who is aware of their needs and attainment. This will usually be the class teacher or form tutor, supported by the SENCO. It should provide an opportunity for the parent to share their concerns and, together with the teacher, agree their aspirations for the pupil.
- 6.68 Conducting these discussions effectively involves a considerable amount of skill. As with other aspects of good teaching for pupils with SEN, schools should ensure that teaching staff are supported to manage these conversations as part of professional development.
- 6.69 These discussions will need to allow sufficient time to explore the parents' views and to plan effectively. Meetings should, wherever possible, be aligned with the normal cycle of discussions with parents of all pupils. They will, however, be longer than most parent-teacher meetings.
- 6.70 The views of the pupil should be included in these discussions. This could be through involving the pupil in all or part of the discussion itself, or gathering their views as part of the preparation.
- 6.71 A record of the outcomes, action and support agreed through the discussion should be kept and shared with all the appropriate school staff. This record should be given to the pupil's parents. The school's management information system should be updated as appropriate.

Use of data and record keeping

- 6.72 It is for schools to determine their own approach to record keeping in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. The provision made for pupils with SEN should be recorded accurately and kept up to date. As part of any inspection, Ofsted will expect to see evidence of pupil progress, a focus on outcomes and a rigorous approach to the monitoring and evaluation of any SEN support provided. Ofsted publish more detail about their expectations in their inspection guidelines.
- 6.73 Schools should particularly record details of additional or different provision made under SEN support. This should form part of regular discussions with parents about the child's progress, expected outcomes from the support and planned next steps. They should ensure that they have accurate information to evidence the SEN support that has been provided over the pupil's time in the school, as well as its impact. A local authority that is considering or is carrying out an assessment of the pupil's needs will wish to review such information (see Chapter 9). For children and young people detained in custody, a Youth Offending Team will seek information from the school to support their initial assessments. The school should respond to such requests as soon as possible (see Chapter 10).
- 6.74 Schools use information systems to monitor the progress and development of all pupils. Details of SEN, outcomes, teaching strategies and the involvement of specialists should be recorded as part of this overall approach.
- 6.75 As outlined in 'Involving parents and pupils in planning and reviewing progress' from paragraph 6.63 above, the school should readily share this information with parents. It should be provided in a format that is accessible (for example, a note setting out the areas of discussion following a regular SEN support meeting or tracking data showing the pupil's progress together with highlighted sections of a provision map that enables parents to see the support that has been provided).
- 6.76 Provision maps are an efficient way of showing all the provision that the school makes which is additional to and different from that which is offered through the school's curriculum. The use of provision maps can help SENCOs to maintain an overview of the programmes and interventions used with different groups of pupils and provide a basis for monitoring the levels of intervention.
- 6.77 Provision management can be used strategically to develop special educational provision to match the assessed needs of pupils across the school, and to evaluate the impact of that provision on pupil progress. Used in this way provision management can also contribute to school improvement by identifying particular patterns of need and potential areas of development for teaching staff. It can help the school to develop the use of interventions that are effective and to remove those

that are less so. It can support schools to improve their core offer for all pupils as the most effective approaches are adopted more widely across the school.

- 6.78 The Department for Education publishes a helpful range of further information and resources about provision mapping (see the References section under Chapter 6 for a link).

Publishing information: SEN information report

- 6.79 The governing bodies of maintained schools and maintained nursery schools and the proprietors of academy schools **must** publish information on their websites about the implementation of the governing body's or the proprietor's policy for pupils with SEN. The information published should be updated annually and any changes to the information occurring during the year should be updated as soon as possible. The information required is set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 and **must** include information about:

- the kinds of SEN that are provided for
- policies for identifying children and young people with SEN and assessing their needs, including the name and contact details of the SENCO (mainstream schools)
- arrangements for consulting parents of children with SEN and involving them in their child's education
- arrangements for consulting young people with SEN and involving them in their education
- arrangements for assessing and reviewing children and young people's progress towards outcomes. This should include the opportunities available to work with parents and young people as part of this assessment and review
- arrangements for supporting children and young people in moving between phases of education and in preparing for adulthood. As young people prepare for adulthood outcomes should reflect their ambitions, which could include higher education, employment, independent living and participation in society
- the approach to teaching children and young people with SEN
- how adaptations are made to the curriculum and the learning environment of children and young people with SEN

- the expertise and training of staff to support children and young people with SEN, including how specialist expertise will be secured
- evaluating the effectiveness of the provision made for children and young people with SEN
- how children and young people with SEN are enabled to engage in activities available with children and young people in the school who do not have SEN
- support for improving emotional and social development. This should include extra pastoral support arrangements for listening to the views of children and young people with SEN and measures to prevent bullying
- how the school involves other bodies, including health and social care bodies, local authority support services and voluntary sector organisations, in meeting children and young people's SEN and supporting their families
- arrangements for handling complaints from parents of children with SEN about the provision made at the school

6.80 The above should include arrangements for supporting children and young people who are looked after by the local authority and have SEN.

6.81 Schools should ensure that the information is easily accessible by young people and parents and is set out in clear, straightforward language. It should include information on the school's SEN policy and named contacts within the school for situations where young people or parents have concerns. It should also give details of the school's contribution to the Local Offer and **must** include information on where the local authority's Local Offer is published.

6.82 In setting out details of the broad and balanced curriculum provided in each year, schools should include details of how the curriculum is adapted or made accessible for pupils with SEN.

6.83 Schools should also make data on the levels and types of need within the school available to the local authority. This data will be required to inform local strategic planning of SEN support, and to enable the local authority to identify pupils who have or may have SEN. Such data, collected through the School Census, is also required to produce the national SEN information report.

The role of the SENCO in schools

- 6.84 Governing bodies of maintained mainstream schools and the proprietors of mainstream academy schools (including free schools) **must** ensure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for the school.
- 6.85 The SENCO **must** be a qualified teacher working at the school. A newly appointed SENCO **must** be a qualified teacher and, where they have not previously been the SENCO at that or any other relevant school for a total period of more than twelve months, they **must** achieve a National Award in Special Educational Needs Co-ordination within three years of appointment.
- 6.86 A National Award **must** be a postgraduate course accredited by a recognised higher education provider. The National College for Teaching and Leadership has worked with providers to develop a set of learning outcomes (see the References section under Chapter 6 for a link). When appointing staff or arranging for them to study for a National Award schools should satisfy themselves that the chosen course will meet these outcomes and equip the SENCO to fulfil the duties outlined in this Code. Any selected course should be at least equivalent to 60 credits at postgraduate study.
- 6.87 The SENCO has an important role to play with the headteacher and governing body, in determining the strategic development of SEN policy and provision in the school. They will be most effective in that role if they are part of the school leadership team.
- 6.88 The SENCO has day-to-day responsibility for the operation of SEN policy and co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEN, including those who have EHC plans.
- 6.89 The SENCO provides professional guidance to colleagues and will work closely with staff, parents and other agencies. The SENCO should be aware of the provision in the Local Offer and be able to work with professionals providing a support role to families to ensure that pupils with SEN receive appropriate support and high quality teaching.
- 6.90 The key responsibilities of the SENCO may include:
- overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN policy
 - co-ordinating provision for children with SEN
 - liaising with the relevant Designated Teacher where a looked after pupil has SEN
 - advising on the graduated approach to providing SEN support

- advising on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively
- liaising with parents of pupils with SEN
- liaising with early years providers, other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals, and independent or voluntary bodies
- being a key point of contact with external agencies, especially the local authority and its support services
- liaising with potential next providers of education to ensure a pupil and their parents are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned
- working with the headteacher and school governors to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- ensuring that the school keeps the records of all pupils with SEN up to date

6.91 The school should ensure that the SENCO has sufficient time and resources to carry out these functions. This should include providing the SENCO with sufficient administrative support and time away from teaching to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities in a similar way to other important strategic roles within a school.

6.92 It may be appropriate for a number of smaller primary schools to share a SENCO employed to work across the individual schools, where they meet the other requirements set out in this chapter of the Code. Schools can consider this arrangement where it secures sufficient time away from teaching and sufficient administrative support to enable the SENCO to fulfil the role effectively for the total registered pupil population across all of the schools involved.

6.93 Where such a shared approach is taken the SENCO should not normally have a significant class teaching commitment. Such a shared SENCO role should not be carried out by a headteacher at one of the schools.

6.94 Schools should review the effectiveness of such a shared SENCO role regularly and should not persist with it where there is evidence of a negative impact on the quality of SEN provision, or the progress of pupils with SEN.

Funding for SEN support

6.95 All mainstream schools are provided with resources to support those with additional needs, including pupils with SEN and disabilities. Most of these resources are determined by a local funding formula, discussed with the local schools forum, which

is also applied to local academies. School and academy sixth forms receive an allocation based on a national funding formula.

- 6.96 Schools have an amount identified within their overall budget, called the notional SEN budget. This is not a ring-fenced amount, and it is for the school to provide high quality appropriate support from the whole of its budget.
- 6.97 It is for schools, as part of their normal budget planning, to determine their approach to using their resources to support the progress of pupils with SEN. The SENCO, headteacher and governing body or proprietor should establish a clear picture of the resources that are available to the school. They should consider their strategic approach to meeting SEN in the context of the total resources available, including any resources targeted at particular groups, such as the pupil premium.
- 6.98 This will enable schools to provide a clear description of the types of special educational provision they normally provide and will help parents and others to understand what they can normally expect the school to provide for pupils with SEN.
- 6.99 Schools are not expected to meet the full costs of more expensive special educational provision from their core funding. They are expected to provide additional support which costs up to a nationally prescribed threshold per pupil per year. The responsible local authority, usually the authority where the child or young person lives, should provide additional top-up funding where the cost of the special educational provision required to meet the needs of an individual pupil exceeds the nationally prescribed threshold.