



2025/2026

# Southwark LA SEND Guidance

for school staff

# Southwark SEND standards

For provision in mainstream schools



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An inclusive setting: providing a positive and supportive environment for all.

## **STANDARD 2**

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# Southwark SEND Standards

## For provision in mainstream schools

### Standard 1 An inclusive setting: providing a positive and supportive environment for all

Schools should:

- Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching.
- Provide an education that is ambitious and promote fulfilment of potential.
- Provide an education that is appropriate to the needs of the pupils.
- Remove barriers to learning and participation.
- Promote positive relationships and well-being for all pupils.
- Adopt a pro-active and positive approach to behaviour.



### Standard 2 Ensuring high quality teaching is accessible to all

Schools should:

Understand great teaching for pupils with SEND is great teaching for all.

Use the following evidence-based teaching strategies for pupils with SEND:

- Scaffolding
- Flexible grouping
- Cognitive and meta cognitive strategies
- Explicit Instruction
- Technology to support pupils with SEND

Ensure all teachers can use these strategies confidently and flexibly in response to the needs of the pupils.

Ensure support staff do not replace the teaching from the classroom teacher.



### Standard 3 Building an ongoing and holistic understanding of need

Schools should:

- Use the graduated approach of 'assess, plan, do, review' to understand pupil's learning needs.
- Assess regularly and purposefully, involving parents/carers, pupils and other professionals.
- Empower and trust teachers to make decisions on next steps for teaching a child.
- Understand the majority of children and YP with SEND will have their needs met in local mainstream schools.
- Understand the purpose of an EHC Plan is to secure the best outcomes across education, health and social care in preparation for adulthood.



### Standard 4 Use targeted support and interventions to supplement high quality teaching

Schools should:

- Understand HQT reduces the need for extra support.
- Understand some pupils will require high quality, targeted and structured interventions to make progress.
- Ensure support staff can regularly access high quality training appropriate to the pupil's needs.
- Increase the intensity of the intervention with need (universal – targeted – specialist).
- Understand the effective deployment of support staff is critical to meeting needs and securing outcomes.
- Ensure school leaders regularly monitor the impact of support staff on pupils with SEND.



### Standard 5 Ensuring all schools know and follow the statutory requirements.

Schools should:

- Know and follow all relevant legislation.
- Review and update all statutory documentation.
- Have up to date knowledge of all access arrangements.
- Follow statutory requirements in respect of admissions, toileting, medical needs and safeguarding.
- Ensure their setting enables the majority of needs to be met without an EHC Plan, including those with complex needs.
- Follow all processes, as set out by Southwark LA, in applying for an EHC needs assessment.
- Ensure effective EHCP provision.
- Follow all statutory requirements for reviewing an EHC plan.





# Standard 1

An inclusive setting: providing a positive and supportive environment for all

## Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching

Schools are expected to focus on the importance of teaching to eliminate barriers for all children, including those who may have additional needs. As well as SEND needs this could also include; English as an additional language, health needs or physical disabilities.

It is the role of Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) in mainstream schools to ensure teachers have the skills and knowledge to deliver the expectations set out in the 'SEND code of Practice' (2014).

The 'SEND code of practice: 0 - 25 years' is a government document outlining the duties local authorities, health bodies, schools and colleges must provide for those with special educational needs.



## Provide an education that is ambitious and promotes fulfilment of potential

Children and young people with SEND should be taught with their peers in a mainstream classroom as much as possible. They should be respected and valued equally to their mainstream peers. The physical environment, such as displays, signage and information, should be accessible to all children and young people with SEND.

Senior leaders should be knowledgeable about SEND in their setting and capable of supporting teachers in providing work that is challenging yet appropriate in level.

# Standard 1

An Inclusive setting: providing a positive and supportive environment for all

## Provide an education that is appropriate to the needs of the pupils

All staff within the setting should have high aspirations for children and young people with SEND.

The setting should recognise supporting pupils with special educational needs is part of a proactive approach to supporting all pupils. This means understanding the specific barriers a pupil faces to learning and what they need in order to thrive and be included in all the school has to offer. Teachers should feel empowered to use the information they collect to make next step decisions for teaching the child or young person. Planning should show that the curriculum is well planned, sequenced and adapted to meet the diverse learning needs of all children and young people with SEND in the setting.

## Remove barriers to learning and participation

Placing support for pupils with SEND at the heart of the school priorities, means removing barriers to learning and participation. This approach should be reinforced in language, activities, routines and strategies, and should be across the whole school. Making informed decisions on all aspects of school life, from allocating lockers and coat pegs to dining room seating and playgroup equipment, can all help to remove barriers to learning and participation.



# Standard 1

An Inclusive setting: providing a positive and supportive environment for all

## Adopt a pro-active and positive approach to behaviour

All settings should be using the recommendations from the ‘improving behaviour in schools’ guidance report. These include:

- 1. Knowing and understanding pupils and their influences.**
- 2. Teaching learning behaviours alongside managing misbehaviour.**
- 3. Using classroom management strategies to support good classroom behaviour.**
- 4. Using simple approaches as part of regular routines.**
- 5. Targeting approaches to meet the needs of individuals.**
- 6. Being consistent.**

## Promote positive relationships and well-being for all pupils

An inclusive school environment for pupils with SEND is beneficial for all pupils and supports better quality interactions. Teachers are responsible for the learning of all pupils, including those with SEND.

*“Building relationships with students is by far the most important thing a teacher can do. Without a solid foundation and relationships built on trust and respect, no quality learning will happen.” Timothy Hilton 2018.*

Improving behaviour  
in schools  
guidance report



# Standard 2

Ensuring high quality teaching is accessible to all

## Understand great teaching for pupils with SEND is great teaching for all

High Quality Teaching (HQT) is the crucial first step in meeting the needs of all children and young people with SEND in any given educational setting. HQT should be embedded into all subject areas, at all levels, across all years and by all teachers. HQT supports the use of effective pedagogical choices, such as adaptive teaching strategies and personalised approaches to learning.

## Ensure support staff do not replace the teaching from the classroom teacher

Children and young people with SEND should be provided with the same if not higher quality of teaching than their mainstream peers. They should be included in mainstream lessons as much as possible and have equal access to class teachers and subject specialists. SENCOs are responsible for defining the role of support staff and their effective deployment throughout the school. Support staff have an important role to play in the development of students with SEND, however, they should not replace high quality teaching.



## Ensure all teachers can use these strategies confidently and flexibly in response to the needs of the pupils

SENCOs and school leaders should ensure that teachers feel confident in delivering the key strategies for all children and young people. To aid this, Southwark provides opportunities for inter-school support, guidance and advice from external professionals and advice on continued professional development (CPD) for teachers and SENCOs.

- Scaffolding
- Flexible grouping
- Cognitive and metacognitive
- Explicit instruction
- Technology

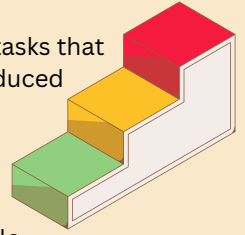
# Standard 2

Ensuring high quality teaching is accessible to all

Teachers should use the following evidence-based teaching strategies for pupils with SEND:

## Scaffolding

- A teacher provides temporary support for pupils to complete tasks that they cannot yet do independently. The support is gradually reduced and finally removed when it is no longer required.



## Flexible grouping

- ‘Streaming’ or grouping pupils together based on their overall attainment may be detrimental to some pupils' learning. Flexible grouping can include mixed ability groups as well as grouping by ability for short periods of time to focus on a specific skill and regularly mixing groups up.

## Cognitive and meta cognitive strategies

- Cognition encompasses all mental process involved in thinking, knowing, understanding and learning.
- Metacognition is the way in which pupils direct or monitor their thinking or learning and how aware they are about their understanding and performance. For example knowing your strengths and weaknesses as a learner.
- Teachers should have a good understanding of cognition and metacognition and the ability to teach strategies that support their development.



## Explicit Instruction

- Explicit instruction is a teacher-led approach that is based around the principles of:
  - demonstration
  - supported practice
  - and then independent task completion



## Technology to support pupils with SEND

- For pupils with SEND, technology can be a very useful tool to support with teaching and learning. Teachers should be open to the use of technology to support children and young people where appropriate.



## Standard 3

Building an ongoing and holistic understanding of need

Having a diagnosis is not on its own a criteria for identifying as SEN within an educational setting. When a child or young person's level of need begins to impact their progress and development, schools should then take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place. This is known as the graduated approach.

### Use the graduated approach of 'assess, plan, do, review' to understand pupil's learning needs

The graduated approach should be used to fully understand how to best support a child or young person with SEND:

#### Assess, Plan, Do and Review cycle (The Graduated Response)

Schools should monitor and review their provision regularly (at least termly) to ensure that they are providing the right support for students.

Assessing the child or young person to formulate a base level, but also assessing the environment such as classroom organisation, teaching materials and learning styles.

Implement the agreed strategies. These should include additional teaching opportunities, provision of additional or alternative equipment or resources, teacher liaison with SENCO and support staff.

Consider what arrangements, reasonable adjustments, and interventions will be required to meet the needs of the child or young person. Then share the plan with staff, parents, pupils, and other professionals involved.



## Standard 3

Building an ongoing and holistic understanding of need

Assess regularly and purposefully, involving parents/carers, pupils and other professionals

Schools and settings should review their processes and create shared ways of working together to improve the quality of participation and involvement of individuals and their families.

Assessing purposefully may sometimes include the involvement of other external professionals, such as: the Educational Psychology Service, Autism Support Team, child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), Cherry Garden Outreach, speech and language therapy, and occupational health. As well as referring parents to Southwark information and advice service (SIAS) for support.

CAMHS

Cherry Garden

ASD team

SIAS



Empower and trust teachers to make decisions on next steps for teaching a child

SENCOs and leaders of Inclusion should empower teachers to try out different strategies to maximise progress for SEND pupils, a regular dialogue should be maintained and SENCOs should be involved in jointly assessing the impact of teaching strategies.

Empowering and trusting teachers means that teachers plan for all children, including those with SEND, receive regular training, meet with support staff, and involve parents/carers and the pupil in decisions about support and meeting outcomes.

# Standard 3

Building an ongoing and holistic understanding of need

## Understand the majority of children and young people with SEND will have their needs met in local mainstream schools

All children and young people, if appropriate should have the opportunity to reach their full potential in local mainstream schools. Southwark Council's ambition for children and young people is that they are safe, have access to a local education setting, feel connected and heard in their community. The term 'ordinarily available provision' comes from the SEND Code of Practice. It refers to the support that mainstream schools or settings are expected to provide for a child or young person through their agreed funding and resource arrangements.

## Understand the purpose of an EHC plan is to secure the best outcomes across education, health and social care in preparation for adulthood

An Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) may be granted when a child or young person has multiple or complex needs in regard to their education, health and/or social care, which cannot be met by the schools delegated SEND budget.

It is a long term plan of how they will be supported to develop and progress at every stage into adulthood. The preparing for adulthood program was created to support children and young people at every stage of their journey and into adulthood with paid employment, good health, independent living, friends and relationships and community inclusion.

The Preparing for Adulthood programme was designed and delivered by the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) to bring together a wide range of expertise and experience of working with young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families.

You can find more useful tools and guides on preparing for adulthood on the NDTi's website.

NDTi  
Preparing for  
adulthood



# Standard 4

Use targeted support and interventions to supplement high quality teaching

## Understand high quality teaching reduces the need for extra support

The SENCO plays an important role in maintaining the strategic overview of the schools approach to managing SEND, and should be able to advise staff on approaches, strategies and interventions to employ.

The NPQ is a mandatory qualification for SENCOs and has replaced the previous NASENCO qualification. The SEND Regulations 2014 have been updated and came into effect from 1st September 2024.

Southwark LA is able to offer all aspiring SENCOs working in the borough the opportunity to complete the National Professional Qualification through the SEND Hub. The award will be delivered by Adam Bridle, Hub lead, in partnership with the London South Teaching Hub (LSTH). To register for the 2025/26 cohort contact Adam Bridle, Deputy Head and Hub lead at Alfred Salter Primary School: [thehub@alfredsalter.com](mailto:thehub@alfredsalter.com)

## Ensure school leaders regularly monitor the impact of support staff on pupils with SEND

It is the responsibility of school leaders to ensure the impact of support staff on pupils with SEND is the very best it can be.

The role of support staff should always be to accompany HQT and never to replace it, this is particularly important for children and young people with SEND.

## Ensure support staff can regularly access high quality training appropriate to the pupil's needs

With increased numbers of SEND support pupils and those with an EHCP in mainstream schools, meeting all needs can be very challenging. That is why it is essential to ensure support staff in schools have regular access to high quality training, including that for complex needs.

There is growing evidence that suggests support staff working alongside classroom teachers during planning and preparation for lessons can improve pupil progress.

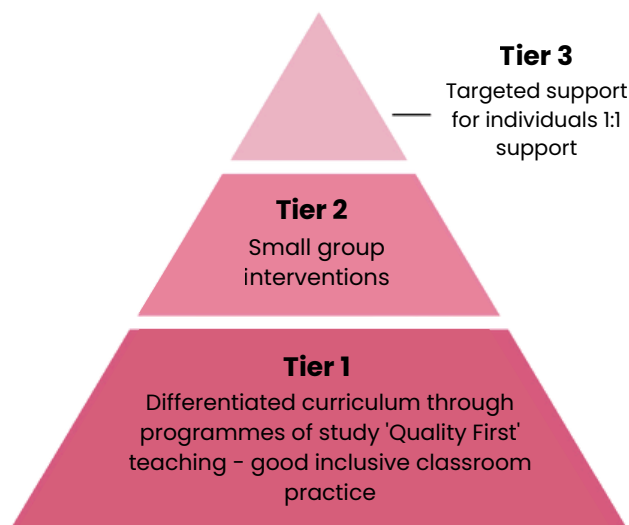
# Standard 4

Use targeted support and interventions to supplement high quality teaching

## Understand some pupils will require high quality, targeted and structured interventions to make progress

High quality teaching should reduce the need for extra support for all pupils. Nevertheless, it is likely that some pupils will require additional support in the form of high quality, structured interventions to make progress. It is advisable for schools to adopt a tiered approach to support and carefully consider when targeted interventions might be appropriate and when they may want to seek additional specialist support.

It is important that schools focus on delivering high quality teaching in the classroom **before moving to tier 2 support** for any learners.



**Figure 1:** the 3-tier model of inclusion provision and interventions



# Standard 4

Use targeted support and interventions to supplement high quality teaching

## Increase the intensity of the intervention with need (universal – targeted – specialist)

Targeted interventions are typically within tier 2 support and usually delivered in small groups of pupils identified with similar barriers to learning. This could include a specific reading or phonics intervention or a catch up numeracy programme. However, schools should focus on delivering high quality teaching in the classroom first for all learners, using a well-planned and sequenced adapted/differentiated curriculum if needed, before moving to any type of intervention.

Schools should use a small number of carefully chosen and well-structured interventions to compliment the overall teaching and learning objectives and minimise the time pupils spend away from the classroom.

## Understand the effective deployment of support staff is critical to meeting needs and securing outcomes

SENCOs and school leaders should regularly review the deployment of support staff in their setting. Southwark recommends the **‘making best use of TAs’ model**, which involves: a cycle of reviewing, defining the role, purpose and contribution of TAs, developing whole school practices, providing training and preparation.



Nasen offer a range of online continued professional development and learning (CPDL) for teachers and support staff.

<https://nasen.org.uk/page/continuing-professional-development-and-learning-cpdl>

# Standard 5

Ensuring all schools know and follow the statutory requirements

## Know and follow all relevant legislation

The statutory requirements are the things that all educational settings **must do** or must have in place **in relation to children and young people with SEND** who are currently attending the setting or who may attend the setting in the future.

## Review and update all statutory documentation

All local authorities must publish a Local Offer, setting out in one place information about provision they expect to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in their area who have SEN or are disabled, including those who do not have Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.

### [Southwark's Local offer](#)

Schools and settings must have four key documents in place and update them annually to ensure they are up to date with statutory guidance. These are:

- **The SEN information report**
- **SEN policy**
- **Accessibility plan**
- **Policy on meeting the needs of children and young people with medical conditions in educational settings**

## Have up to date knowledge of all access arrangements

Children and young people with SEND should be included in all regular assessments and exams where possible. Schools must consider whether any of their pupils will need access arrangements before they administer the tests. Types of support available include: additional time, adaptations of test papers, compensatory marks for spelling, use of scribes, word processors, readers, prompts, rest breaks and highlighter pens.

# Standard 5

Ensuring all schools know and follow the statutory requirements

## Follow statutory requirements in respect of admissions, toileting, medical needs and safeguarding

### Admissions

School admissions are covered by the Equality Act. This means a school cannot refuse to take a child because they have a disability or SEN, if the child would otherwise have been eligible for a place under the admission criteria. Equally, a school cannot refuse to admit a child on the grounds that the child may need an EHCP but hasn't yet got one, or on the grounds of the child's challenging behaviour (except in very limited circumstances). There is a general right in law to a mainstream school place if this is what a parent wants.

### Toileting

The statutory requirements around children and young people who are not yet fully continent, states it is the schools duty to support children and young people with medical conditions, including bladder and bowel problems. If a child or young person has an identified continence issue which won't be resolved before they start school (whether related to toilet training or not), the school cannot refuse entry.

Providing intimate care counts as a reasonable adjustment for pupils who are not toilet trained, not able to use a toilet independently, or need other help with intimate tasks (Equality Act 2010).

For more information and advice on bowel and bladder problems, see:

**ERIC**  
**National bowel and bladder charity**

### Safeguarding

Children and young people with SEND or certain medical conditions can be more vulnerable than their mainstream peers therefore, schools and colleges should consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children. All schools and settings have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who should be trained in recognising the additional risks that children with SEND face online and in real life. The DSL is expected to: liaise with teachers, pastoral support staff, school nurses, SENCOs and other school staff on matters of safety, safeguarding and welfare.

# Standard 5

Ensuring all schools know and follow the statutory requirements

## **Ensure their setting enables the majority of needs to be met without an EHC Plan, including those with complex needs**

All Southwark schools receive funding to develop SEN provision, this funding is intended to allow schools to make effective early intervention and SEN provision for groups and individual children. Schools decide how their budget is spent in line with their own priorities, planned strategic SEND developments and the needs of their pupils. The majority of SEN support needs are to be met through this funding, meaning all children and young people within a setting can access support including those who do not have a formal diagnosis or EHCP.

## **Follow all processes, as set out by Southwark LA, in applying for an EHC needs assessment.**

When a school or setting believe that a child or young person's needs cannot be met through graduated SEN support, it may be time to consider applying for an EHC needs assessment.

### **When applying for a needs assessment, schools must provide Southwark with:**

- Evidence that the child or young person has significant special educational needs, which require long-term, highly individualised interventions.
- The child or young person is making unsatisfactory progress in relation to self and/or peers despite well-planned and powerful interventions over time with SEN Support alone.
- The child or young person has significant difficulties in accessing the school curriculum because of the impact of his or her special educational need.
- The school is already providing levels of support commensurate with an EHCP and predict the child or young person will continue to need this level of support in order to continue making progress over a longer time period.

# Standard 5

Ensuring all schools know and follow the statutory requirements

## Ensure effective EHCP provision

The provision being made for a child or young person with an EHC plan should directly address the stated outcomes, be evidence based and regularly reviewed. The provision should also act to promote inclusion, independence and confidence. Schools should monitor progress at least termly and review the EHC plan annually.

## Follow all statutory requirements for reviewing an EHC plan

**All EHC plans must be reviewed at least annually and every six months for children under five.**

EHC plans should be used to actively monitor children and young people's progress towards their outcomes and longer term aspirations. The review must also consider whether the outcomes and supporting targets remain appropriate.

Schools should invite parents and any other relevant professionals to annual reviews two weeks prior to the meeting date. External professionals who are involved in supporting or providing interventions can also be invited.

After the review, schools must send forms and reports that are part of it to the LA within 10 working days of the meeting. Southwark will then decide whether to amend, cease or leave the EHC plan unchanged.





# Is your school meeting the standards?

The [Southwark SEND Standards School Self-Assessment Tool](#) is available to help schools audit their provision for pupils with SEND.

## Help and support

All primary and secondary schools in Southwark are allocated a SEND Consultant, who can help with the following:

**CPD and training:** for teachers and support staff on all aspects of SEND, conduct environment audits and support the development of inclusive policies such as for behaviour.

**Planning and provision:** support the development of ambitious curriculums and policies and analyse provision mapping and advise on effective use of interventions.

**Data:** Advice and support in gathering, tracking and interpreting SEND data; reviewing and evaluating school assessment and tracking systems.

**Community:** Facilitating the sharing of good practice across the borough. Organising visits to other settings for teaching and support staff and being a visible presence and point of contact for head teachers, SENDCOs and other leaders in SEND.

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This document has been coproduced by the Senior Adviser for SEND, SEN Team, SENCOS and wider Southwark SEND Service.

# Useful Links

## Southwark Local Offer

An outline of everything available to children and young people (aged 0-25) with SEND in Southwark.

## Cherry Garden School - Outreach Support Service

Outreach support for individual primary school children with SEND in mainstream settings. Support and training for teachers, TAs and SENCOs in mainstream settings working with children with SEND.

## Nasen

National Association for Special Educational Needs, provides online CPDL for education staff working with children and young people with SEND.

## SEND Code of Practice

The SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2014), is the statutory code of all legal requirements that must be provided by local authorities, health bodies and schools and educational settings for children and young people with SEND.

## Alfred Salter Primary School - SEND Hub

The SEND Hub provide support for SENCOs and inclusion leads through half-termly community events. They will be delivering the national SENCO award from Autumn 2023.