SENCO Induction Pack

Supporting you at the start of your journey

WholeSchool SEND

National Award for SEN Coordination Provider Partnership
Leading Learning for Special Educational Needs & Disability
Community Interest Company

nasen
Helping Everyone Achieve

SENCO Induction Pack

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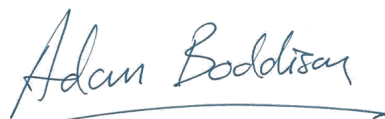
Acknowledgements

Foreword

The SENCO[1] plays a central role in ensuring that every learner feels included and has the opportunity to reach their full potential. For the SENCO to be as effective as possible, the responsibility for SEND[2] provision must be shared, with every leader a leader of SEND and every teacher a teacher of learners with SEND. An experienced and effective SENCO will take a child-centred approach and will work in partnership with parents/carers and other professionals. We recognise that the SENCO role is complex and when things are going well the SENCO's work can have a transformational impact on the educational experiences of the children and young people with whom they work.

This induction pack has been designed by SENCOs for SENCOs as a useful reference tool that can be used from day one of undertaking this important role. It can be a valuable asset to both new and experienced professionals alike and we would recommend it to all SENCOs. We understand that the role is context-specific and so, instead of trying to prescribe a single approach, this induction pack sets out the key operational considerations so that SENCOs can make more informed decisions.

This SENCO Induction Pack has been developed by Leading Learning for SEND Community Interest Company as part of a suite of resources developed by the Whole School SEND Consortium[3], hosted by nasen[4], to embed good SEND provision in schools. This project was funded by the Department for Education. As such, the induction pack includes references to a broad range of organisations, resources and documents from across the SEND community. This is in keeping with one of the wider principles of Whole School SEND, which is to maximise the use of existing resources to save schools time and money.

The education landscape is constantly evolving and so we see this as a developmental document that will need to be updated periodically. We hope you find the SENCO induction pack useful and informative and we would welcome any feedback you have: welcome@nasen.org.uk

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[1] Special Educational Needs Coordinator
[2] Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities
[3] https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/whole-school-send/
[4] National Association for Special Educational Needs

Contents

Section 1:
The purpose of this induction pack

This document has been developed based on the feedback from Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) and the discussions of a range of providers of the National Award for SEN Co-ordination about the information that they believe you will need to support you as you start in your new role as a SENCO.

It is designed to provide you with an overview of the type of information that will support you as you take your first steps as a leader on inclusion. This pack covers a range of different areas which you can refer to as needed.

We understand that SENCOs work across a broad range of settings so some sections may be more relevant to you than others.

The pack has been designed to signpost you to a range of resources as well as the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015) that will help you to develop your knowledge, skills and understanding.

To help get you started in your new role, we have included an induction checklist in the next section.

Definitions and acronyms

There are many acronyms in SEND which can be confusing; useful lists are provided here:

https://www.senexpertsolicitors.co.uk/site/services/services-for-parents/educational-needs-acronyms/

https://specialneedsjungle.com/glossary-of-send-terms/

Section 2: Checklist

Checklist

This is based on the checklist produced by the University of Roehampton. These suggestions are not in any particular order.

	People you need to meet and things you need to know	Done
1	Make sure you have a handover with the current SENCO in your school this term, if there is one. On the next page there is a list of questions/things you need to find out from the SENCO. Can you make a judgement about the area you are taking over? Get a list from the SENCO of all their contacts – agencies and the names of the people in the agencies and their roles. Try to get telephone numbers and emails.	
2	Try to meet some key people this term if you can to talk things through: • Your headteacher – ensure you have time to undertake this post. Establish whether you are on the Senior Leadership Team and share this checklist with them. • Your Educational Psychologist – go through the pupils who have Education, Health and Care Plans, and any who may still have Statements. • Your local Behaviour Support Service or Pupil Referral Unit • The local ASD (Autism) Advisory Support Service • Your SEND Contact in the Local Authority. If you can meet these services in their offices, this can be helpful too. These people will all be good supportive contacts for you and you need their telephone numbers. Ask the name of the SEND governor – put it down on your list of meetings in the first term.	
3	You need a SENCO friend in a neighbouring school, if that's possible – someone who has done the job and is experienced, or someone you have worked with before. This would be someone you could call to say…'what do we normally do when…'	
4	Join the SENCO Forum: https://www.thesencoforum.org.uk/login	
5	You need to bookmark these websites. They will be useful to you. Spend some time looking at them: www.nasen.org.uk https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/increasing-options-and-improving-provision-for-children-with-special-educational-needs-sen http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/ http://www.contact.org.uk/ http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/ http://www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk/ http://www.place2be.org.uk/ http://www.youngminds.org.uk/	

6	You need to read the following documents, which you can access at the links below: *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25* (2014 (updated 2015)) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25 The Equality Act Guidance for Schools https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools *Mental health and behaviour in schools* (2018) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2 *Behaviour and discipline in schools* (2016) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2 Guidelines for the 'use of reasonable force' https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools	
7	In your role you will be making confidential calls about individual children or young people with special needs, so you will need an office space where you can make those calls – a telephone and some locked filing. Most documents are stored electronically but there will always be some that are not and which you will not get around to scanning – children's work, parent letters etc. Make sure you have access to all the passwords that you will require for information management systems.	
	Strategic preparation	
8	Information about all pupils with SEND. You need the following: a. A list of all learners with EHCPs b. A list of any pupils with statutory assessments in process for EHCPs c. You need to see where the EHCPs and the annual reviews of those EHCPs are kept and how you access them d. For each pupil you need to know when their next annual review is due – this may well not be until next summer – but get the date and put the name and annual review due in your diary. Some reviews may be to transition pupils with Statements on to Education Health and Care plans – make sure you know which these are.	
9	EYFS or year 7 – new pupils coming into school – are there any which will require urgent attention and support? How is this normally arranged or put in place?	
10	Check that the school's Information Report and the school's SEN Policy are on the school website – this is a statutory requirement and it will be your first priority if it is not there already. Talk to the headteacher if it is not there, about how it is going to get there before the end of term – but you should not embark on writing one, until you know the school. The school's Information Report explains what provision pupils with SEN will get at the school and if you are new to the role and the school, you may not know that.	
11	Ask how pupils are identified as having SEND • does the class teacher or a subject teacher make a referral? • does the SENCO observe the pupil? • how does it happen?	
12	Can you see a whole school provision map or how whole school provision management of SEND works?	
13	A list of all the pupils on the SEN register – by year group, type of SEN for those at SEN Support or with an EHCP – work this out as a percentage of the school roll and compare this to the national data.	
14	Find out what the budget for SEND is. Is there a way of establishing how effective the spending on SEND has been?	

Section 3: Understanding the role of the SENCO

As a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator you are in a position to inspire inclusive practice in your setting and to ensure the best possible outcomes for all children and young people. The statutory requirements around this role are set out in the Children and Families Act (2014), the SEND Regulations (2014) and The SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2014) (please see Section 4).

As you begin your journey in this position, you have the responsibility for overseeing the provision that is made for the children and young people in your setting who have been identified as having special educational needs and disability (SEND).

You will have a strategic overview of the policy and practice in your setting. Some of your time will be engaged in monitoring the impact of the provision that is in place for those with SEND within your setting. You will also be advising teachers/practitioners on the best ways to ensure that all children or young people in their classes are making sufficient progress, as well as ensuring the social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people.

It is the child or young person's teacher(s) who are responsible for their progress. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2014 (updated 2015)) is very clear about this:

'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' (DfE and DoH, 2015:101).

As a SENCO, you will be leading on inclusion in your setting. This means that you will be leading the school community to adopt inclusive values and practices. You will lead by example by modelling your commitment to include all children and young people in curricula and extra-curricular activities.

It is important to consider that 'The effective school leader is motivated by a fundamental moral purpose towards inclusion as a core value, and with this a non-negotiable commitment to enabling achievement for ALL children within school, believing that ALL children have a right to achieve their potential, while also understanding that achievement is far wider than simply a numerical level' (National College, 2010:8).

You may find it useful to consider how far your own institution reflects these aims and to consider the following questions:
• Would you be able to articulate your vision for inclusion in your setting?
• How are your values shared across the setting?
• How do you demonstrate your commitment to the principles of inclusion?

As a new SENCO, the road ahead may initially seem confusing and overwhelming but there are plenty of places to seek advice and support. This guide will point the way to some sources of support, but it is also important to engage with other SEN specialists, especially other SENCOs who can provide invaluable support.

Make sure you visit nasen's SEND gateway: https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/
This is a one-stop website for all things SEND. nasen, along with Whole School SEND, have brought together a wealth of information to support you with your role. The Whole School SEND is a consortium of schools, organisations and individuals whose purpose is to ensure that every child and young person with SEND can achieve their potential at school.

The SENCO Forum is hosted on nasen's SEND Gateway: https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/

Explore the networks that are available locally, some of which may be facilitated by your Local Authority, a teaching school or university.

Most importantly, make sure that you take time to talk with other people who understand your role, including members of your senior leadership team. The designated governor for SEND is an important link to make early on in your role.

Section 4:
Legislation and Guidance

As a SENCO in England you will need to be aware of the key legislation and guidance which underpins your work. This section of the induction pack identifies these key documents and will help you to identify aspects of these documents which you will need to work with on a regular basis.

Key Legislation: The Children and Families Act (2014)

Part 3 of The Children and Families Act (2014) provides the legal framework for many of the systems and processes for supporting children and young people with SEND. It is available here:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents

This legislation provides the legal framework for a range of regulations and guidance, in particular the Special Educational Needs Regulations (2014) and Code of Practice (2014 and updated 2015). It also links closely with the Equality Act (2010). The Act sets out duties on local authorities, education settings and other partners.

There is a helpful guide to Part 3 published here:
https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/summary-children-and-families-act

Key principles of The Children and Families Act (2014)

- Taking into account the views of children, young people and their families
- Enabling children, young people and their parents to participate in the decision making
- Collaborating with partners in education, health and social care to provide support
- Identifying the needs of children and young people
- Making high quality provision to meet the needs of children and young people
- Focusing on inclusive practices and removing barriers to learning
- Helping children and young people to prepare for adulthood.

These principles are underpinned by legal duties placed on LAs, schools and others and will guide you as you work in partnership with children, young people, families and within your school.

The Children and Families Act (2014) – Duties for the Local Authority (LA)

- a duty to identify all the children and young people in its area who may have SEN or a disability
- to have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of the child, parents and young person
- to develop and publish a 'Local Offer' that sets out the services and provision it expects to be available both inside and outside the LA's area for children and young people with SEN and a disability.

The Children and Families Act (2014) – Duties for educational settings

In addition to supporting the duties of the Local Authority, schools and early years settings also have legal duties, including:
- to prepare a report containing SEN Information
- to use its best endeavours to secure that the special educational provision called for by the pupil's or student's special educational needs is made
- to designate a member of staff at the school (to be known as the "SEN co-ordinator") as having responsibility for co-ordinating the provision for pupils with special educational needs
- must inform the child's parent or the young person that special educational provision is being made for the child or young person.

The Children and Families Act (2014) – The SENCO

The Act states that 'the SENCO has an important role to play with the headteacher and governing body, in determining the strategic development of SEN policy and provision…'

The Act does not require you to be a member of the Leadership Team, but it implies that you should be. It states that SENCOs '…will be most effective in that role if they are part of the school leadership team.'

Key Legislation: The SEND Regulations (2014)

This document outlines the regulations that underpin the Children and Families Act 2014. They support the law contained in the Act and these can be found here:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/1530/pdfs/uksi_20141530_en.pdf

Key Guidance: The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2014, updated 2015)

The Code of Practice provides statutory guidance on the duties, policies and procedures relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Regulations. It applies to all maintained settings, academies and free schools in England. The SEND Code of Practice is available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

It provides you with a guide to the legislation that enables you to understand the assessment and identification of need and the procedures that should be in place to enable children and young people to reach their full potential and be included in their setting.

It identifies all teachers as teachers of learners with SEND. This means that all teachers and practitioners are responsible and accountable for the progress of the children and young people with SEND. This means that it is not entirely the responsibility of the SENCO. However, you have a role to play in this.

Governing bodies of maintained mainstream schools and the proprietors of academy schools (including free schools) must ensure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for the school.

Where a SENCO appointed after 1st September 2008 has not previously been the SENCO at that or any other relevant school for a total period of more than twelve months, they must achieve the National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination within 3 years of appointment. Providers who have Quality Standards accreditation with Leading Learning for Special Educational Needs CiC NASENCO Provider Partnership can be found here: http://www.nasen.org.uk/about/partnerships/

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. For information about the identification and assesment of SEND please see Section 5.

Key Legislation: The Equality Act (2010)

The Equality Act 2010 brought together a range of previous acts including: the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007. The Act is available here:

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

The Equality Act (2010) – Key principles

- Schools have a responsibility not to discriminate
- Provision for disabled pupils is closely connected with the regime for children with special educational needs
- Schools are allowed to treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils without disabilities
- Direct discrimination or failure to make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person cannot be defended as justified.

Under this act, the term 'schools' applies to:
- local-authority-maintained schools
- academies and free schools
- local authorities
- non-maintained special schools
- independent schools

The principles are underpinned by legal duties placed on public bodies including schools.

The Equality Act (2010): Duties for schools and further education settings

This legislation outlines particular duties for schools. These include:
- to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty
- to prepare and publish equality objectives

It is up to schools to decide how they publish the information, so long as it is accessible to members of the school community and the public who want to see it. The Act suggests an 'equalities page' on the school website.

Settings should prepare and implement accessibility plans. This is the responsibility of the leadership team of the setting but you will make a contribution.

Where something that a school does places a pupil with a disability at a disadvantage compared to other pupils then the school must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage. You will have a role in ensuring that this is enacted.

Schools will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a pupil with a disability when it would be reasonable to do so. You may find that you are involved in liaising with suppliers or specialists to ensure that this happens.

The Equality Act (2010) – Further resources

- Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education (CSIE): *Equality Act: 2010*. Available at:
  http://www.csie.org.uk/inclusion/equality-act-2010.shtml
- Cheminais, R. (2015): *Special educational needs for qualified and trainee teachers: a practical guide to the new changes*. 3rd edn. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Citizens Advice Bureau (2018): *Disability Discrimination in Schools*. Available at:
  https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/education/discrimination-in-education/disability-discrimination-in-schools/
- DfE (2014): *The Equality Act 2010 and schools: Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities*. Available at:
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (2012): *Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils*. Available at:
  https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/reasonable-adjustments-disabled-pupils
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (2018): *Equality Act 2010 Technical Guidance on Further and Higher Education*. Available at:
  https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/equality-act-2010-technical-guidance-further-and-higher-education

Additional Legislation: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

The UK ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1991. Aspects of the convention are particularly relevant for children and young people with SEND. These are important to consider when ensuring that you are consulting children, young people and their families in an authentic and meaningful way. There is further information on this in Section 9.

Key articles

Article 2 (non-discrimination)
The Convention applies to every child without discrimination.

Article 3 (best interests of the child)
The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 12 (respect for the views of the child)
Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.

Article 13 (freedom of expression)
Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.

Article 18 (parental responsibilities and state assistance)
Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child.

Article 23 (children with a disability)
A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is available here:
https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/

Additional Legislation: Working Together To Safeguard Children (2018)

There are some important areas of this legislation which link to your SENCO role, including:
- anyone working with children should see and speak to the child; listen to what they say; take their views seriously; and work with them and their families collaboratively when deciding how to support their needs. Special provision should be put in place to support dialogue with children who have communication difficulties
- practitioners should be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who is disabled and has specific additional needs or who has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- this legislation identifies the SENCO as someone who may undertake the Lead Practitioner role in an Early Help case.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

Additional Legislation and Guidance: Supporting Pupils at School With Medical Conditions (2017)

This guidance states that schools must:
- have a named person as the link for medical needs
- support pupils with medical conditions so that they have full access to education, including school trips and physical education
- ensure that arrangements are in place in schools to support pupils at school with medical conditions
- consult health and social care professionals, pupils and parents to ensure that the needs of children with medical conditions are properly understood and effectively supported.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3

There is a nasen mini-guide which provides further detail: *Children with medical needs: what schools and settings need to know*. Available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3

Section 5: Identifying and Understanding Areas of Need

As a SENCO, you will need to understand the ways in which the needs of children and young people are identified and assessed. **Not all children and young people with a condition or impairment will necessarily fall into either of these categories.** There are legal definitions of special educational needs and disability that you need to know about. This section will support you with understanding these. Alongside this, you will be asked to work with colleagues to identify the best ways to support children and young people to achieve their potential. To do this, it is important to understand the barriers to learning and participation that they face. Knowing the areas of need will support with this process.

Definition of Special Educational Needs

The Children and Families Act 2014 states that:

A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

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

The extent to which a child may require 'additional to and different from' provision is viewed as dependent upon effective high quality teaching and good differentiation.

It may be helpful for you to consider, in relation to your own setting, how you perceive 'additional to and different from provision'.

Definition of Disability

Children and young people may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010: '…a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. The SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015:xviii) outlines that: 'This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as

'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN.'

You might find it helpful to think about when a child or young person might fall into both categories.

The four broad areas of need

The SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015:97-98) outlines 'four broad areas of need'. The four broad areas of need are:
• Communication and interaction
• Cognition and learning
• Social, emotional and mental health
• Sensory and/or physical

The Code explains that these are an indicator of the different needs that should be planned for rather than a system for purely labelling children. This is because many children and young people have needs in more than one area, and everyone is different. It is important that you consider the individual rather than just the need when planning the provision that should be in place. The following section provides a brief overview of the areas of need and there are resources available at the end of this section.

Each area of need is illustrated below along with the types of needs that might fall into that category.

Communication and interaction

Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) fall within this area of need. SLCN may mean that the child or young person requires support with speech production and understanding and expressing language. Sometimes, the way in which language is used in the classroom and around school may impact on their learning.

Children and young people on the autism spectrum fall within this category too.

It is also important to consider whether the child or young person has associated learning difficulties (these are outlined in the Cognition and learning section).

Cognition and learning

Within this broad area of need there are learning difficulties (which may be moderate or severe), profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and specific learning difficulties (SpLD).

Specific learning difficulties encompasses a range of conditions including: dyslexia (a difficulty with accurate and fluent reading and spelling), dyscalculia (a difficulty with number and calculation), and dyspraxia or 'developmental coordination disorder'.

Social, emotional and mental health

Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which can manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, or displaying challenging behaviour. These behaviours may reflect a range of underlying issues such as anxiety or depression. Other children and young

people may have Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). See Code of Practice s6.28 for more information.

It is important to remember that provision needs to meet the underlying causes of the presenting behaviour rather than just address the behaviour.

Due to the nature of this area of need, the child or young person may also have associated learning difficulties.

Sensory and/or physical

Sensory impairments, such as vision impairment (VI) and hearing impairment (HI), as well as physical disabilities, fall within this area.

Some children and young people within this area of need will not have learning needs whereas others may also have associated needs within the area of Cognition and learning.

Resources

Communication and interaction

The advanced training materials for autism and speech, language and communication would enable you to gain an understanding of these areas of need. These are available here:
http://www.advanced-training.org.uk/

The Autism Education Trust (AET) has a number of useful free resources including the Schools Standards (plus Post 16 and Early Years versions) which help schools to audit their whole school provision for children with autism. The framework is full of helpful links to resources. There is also a Competencies Framework to support staff in being skilful and knowledgeable, plus a free Progression Tracker which is a detailed excel spreadsheet covering seven areas of need, such as 'social communication' and 'imaginative play' to monitor pupils' progress:
https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/

ICAN is a charitable organisation supporting children with speech, language and communication needs:
https://www.ican.org.uk/about-us/

The Inclusion Development Programme materials for autism and SLCN are a good place to start when considering these areas of need:
http://www.idponline.org.uk/

The Communication Trust provides a range of information on 'What Works' for learners with speech, language and communication needs, a 'Competency Framework' to support knowledge and skills in the workforce and a 'Communication Supporting Classroom Observation Tool' to assess whether classroom provision is supportive of children with SCLN:
http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/

See the Talking Point website (a collaboration by ICAN and the Communication Trust) for further advice and information:
http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/

Cognition and learning

For resources for supporting children and young people with dyslexia visit:

The British Dyslexia Association provides a range of resources:
https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/

The Driver Youth Trust is another excellent source of information:
https://www.driveryouthtrust.com/

The Dyslexia-SPLD Trust has a wide range of resources, including a free professional development framework to help a SENCO support staff knowledge and training. It also has a useful online guide to help implement the Code of Practice, and a 'What Works' guide to literacy interventions (by Greg Brooks, 2016). This is available as a free download:
http://www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk/

www.interventionsforliteracy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/What-Works-5th-edition-Rev-Oct-2016.pdf

The Education Endowment Foundation has a teaching and learning toolkit which summarises research to help schools make decisions about teaching practice to help close the attainment gap between children:
https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/

The EEF is currently developing new resources that will focus on effective interventions for children and young people with special educational needs.

The Inclusion Development Programme has a set of materials and resources that are helpful to develop your knowledge, skills and understanding of dyslexia:
http://www.idponline.org.uk/

There are some very helpful advanced training materials available here to support you with developing your knowledge, skills and understanding about the full range of learning difficulties:
http://www.advanced-training.org.uk/

Social, emotional and mental health

The Department for Education guidance *Mental health and behaviour in schools* (2018) gives advice how schools can support pupils whose mental health problems manifest themselves in behaviour:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2

This link includes documents with advice on face-to-face and cyber bullying. The documents contain helpful links to a wide range of different organisations and resources:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

MindEd offers a wide range of free video materials covering a large number of topics on mental health and young people:
https://www.minded.org.uk/

This toolkit from the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families provides school case studies of good practice to support wellbeing. It also has a useful table of wellbeing tools suitable for schools to assess young people, broken down into year groups, wellbeing criteria measured and cost:
https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/schools-in-mind/resources-for-schools/mental-health-toolkit-for-schools/

This gov.uk page focused on research and analysis, provides case studies from schools about activities to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-mental-health-in-schools-and-colleges

Free book published by Routledge and nasen on the topic of Social Emotional Wellbeing in Schools:
https://www.routledge.com/posts/13991

The Young Minds website contains a school resources section; this also includes information about caring for the wellbeing of parents and staff:
https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/

You could also explore the materials shared by Mental Health First Aid England:
https://mhfaengland.org/

Sensory and/or physical

The National Association for Sensory Impairment (NatSIP) has a dedicated page for SENCOs and school practitioners with a range of links to organisations to support specific types of sensory impairment plus advise on strategies and support for children with sensory impairments:
https://www.natsip.org.uk/

The National Deaf Children's Society provides a range of information for families of children who are deaf or hearing impaired:
http://www.ndcs.org.uk/family_support/index.html

The Royal National Institute for the Blind provides guidance for teachers on educating children/young people who are blind/visually impaired:
https://www.rnib.org.uk/services-we-offer-advice-professionals-education-professionals/guidance-teaching-and-learning

The Council for Disabled Children (CDC) has a detailed Early Years Toolkit to help SENCOs implement the Code of Practice. The CDC also has sections for parents, healthcare providers and young people as part of their Resource Hub:
https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/

This Department for Education document gives an overview of the legislative responsibilities towards pupils with medical conditions, plus practical guidelines on topics such as keeping and storing medications in school and organising out-of-school activities:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3

# Section 6: Using the graduated approach and SEN Support

High quality teaching that is adapted to meet the needs of individual learners is the first step to responding to pupils who have or may have SEND. The graduated approach helps to ensure that the needs of learners with SEND have their needs assessed early and personalised support is put in place.

Settings should have robust systems in place for ensuring all learners have access to **universal high-quality teaching**. Packer (2017: online) defines high quality teaching for learners with SEN:

'High-quality teaching for pupils with SEN is about the day-to-day interactions that take place in your classroom and the different pedagogical approaches you use to engage, motivate and challenge learners. It is about the way you use assessment and feedback to identify gaps and help students to move on in their learning. It is about providing both support and challenge in order to enable them to achieve more.'

The SENCO plays a collaborative role in supporting the teacher to develop inclusive high-quality teaching for all learners.

As a SENCO, you should be using, and supporting others to use, the graduated approach to learning. The graduated approach begins at the whole setting level (shown below as 'universal provision'). Part of your role as a SENCO is to support staff in providing high quality inclusive teaching as part of universal provision across the setting. You might do this by monitoring planning or observing teaching. If children or young people do not make progress in spite of high quality teaching then some targeted provision may be required. You should work with the learner, class teachers, support staff and families to identify the best provision to enable the child or young person to make progress.
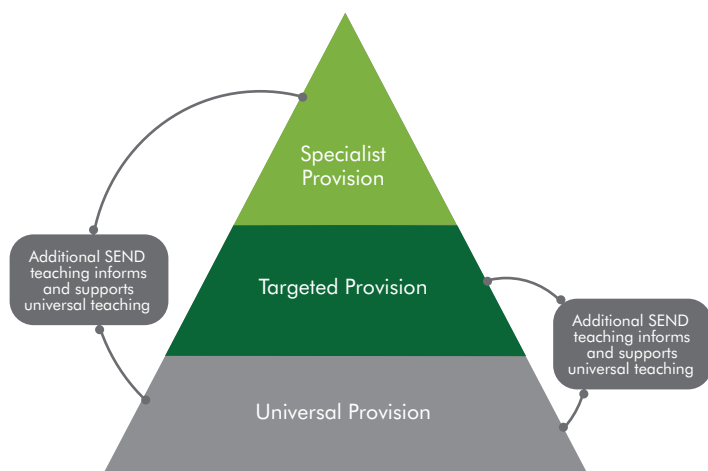
Some children and young people with SEND may require additional support to remove barriers to learning. The SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015) defines **SEN Support** as provision that is complementary to high quality teaching. This support must be planned for in order to remove barriers to learning and participation.

The decision about the best form of support is made following an assessment of the child or young person's needs. This forms part of what is called the **graduated approach**. This is a four-part cycle – **assess**, **plan**, **do**, **review** – that allows for a thorough assessment of need through teacher assessment and sometimes standardised tests to inform the next steps in learning and participation. A plan is made and the additional provision is actioned. After an agreed amount of time, this provision is reviewed and the cycle begins again. We will now look at this in more detail.

The Assess-Plan-Do-Review Cycle

Assess

In this part of the cycle, you will support teachers or practitioners to undertake an analysis of the child or young person's needs. Teacher assessment should be taken into consideration alongside any data around progress and attainment. How does the learner's data compare to their peers and the national expectations for their age-related expectations? It is important to look at the factors that might be having an impact on learning such as attendance and attitudes to work. It is very important to take the child or young person's views alongside the views of their families into account too. It could be that there are other professionals that are working with the child or young person, such as educational psychologists, therapists or specialist teacher advisors. Their reports will also help to gain a holistic picture of the child or young person's needs. Parents should also be involved in forming the assessment of needs.

You need to be very clear as to whether a learner has special educational needs or whether their lack of progress is due to other factors or under-achievement.

Early years practitioners, teachers and lecturers must use a range of assessment measures to identify learners who are not making expected levels of progress in relation to the expected standard and/or to the individual learner's own prior attainment and rates of progress. The individualised approach to addressing the needs of children and young people allows for a thorough understanding of need and this leads to the personalisation of learning in the next stage of the cycle.

As a SENCO, you need to ask:
• How effective are my setting's systems for assessing pupils and identifying those who are not making progress?
• What factors may be inhibiting progress?
• What types of existing quantitative and qualitative data can be used to inform the assessment processes?
• How is the setting disaggregating underachievement from special educational need?
• How are the views of learners and parents elicited and considered in the assessment process?
• How is evidence collected about teaching approaches that are effective/not effective for individual learners?
• How is the evidence analysed and shared to inform planning for each individual's need?

Useful assessment tools
• Criterion referenced tests
• Screeners
• Standardised tests
• Checklists
• Pupil observations
• Pupil interview/questionnaire
• Parent interview/questionnaire

In addition to these, it is useful to review attendance data. Please see The SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015:100-101) for the further information.

Plan

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.

Your role is to ensure that all staff working with the child or young person know about their needs and what support is to be provided to ensure that the learner meets their outcomes. These may be academic but it is also important to consider preparation for adulthood outcomes as well. Your setting should record the provision that is made in some form of information management system. The Engagement Model tool provides clear guidance on how to recognise all the progress that pupils make, as it will not always be 'linear' progress.

Where assessments have determined that additional intervention is required for particular learners, this should be time limited and effectively monitored with clear outcomes for the individuals. A date should be set for monitoring the effectiveness of the intervention

Provision mapping systems (please see Section 8) provide a means of monitoring the interventions provided for individuals and groups of learners.

Consideration should be given to the evidence-base for the interventions being implemented to ensure that there has been research undertaken into their effectiveness (please see the Resource section for further details).

Do

The SEND Code of Practice is very clear that it is the child or young person's teacher(s) who are responsible for their progress. Therefore, close collaboration between the teacher and support or specialist teaching staff delivering the support is crucial. This might be in-class provision that enables the child or young person to access the whole class curriculum. It may also be an intervention programme. Intervention running records provide a means of collecting information and monitoring the implementation of the intervention.

The SENCO ensures that there is close liaison with the person delivering the support. There is also a requirement for the SENCO to work with the class teacher to monitor the delivery of the intervention and ensuring fidelity to the programme. To support both the SENCO and teacher with this process, teachers might complete their own class provision map. This map of class provision can then feed-up into a larger whole school provision map (please see Section 8 for more information on provision management).

Review

Your role is to ensure that you work with teachers to analyse the impact of any additional provision that has been made. Practitioners, teachers and lecturers do this for all learners but you will need to ensure that you have an overview of the progress of learners with SEND. As part of this review process, you will consult with the learner and their parents about the outcome of the support and what the next steps will be.

Progress towards targets should be reviewed at least termly and should take account of the views of the learner, parent/carer, teacher and specialist or support staff who have been involved in the delivery of the intervention. It is important to consider who should be involved in the review meeting.

If a child or young person has an EHCP, then there must be an annual review. The setting leads on this review in partnership with the local authority. Further information on this is available in Section 7.

Review meetings should focus on:
• progress made and extent to which outcomes have been met
• the evidence to support the judgments made
• the views of the learner on the support and intervention and the next steps
• the views of the parents on the support and intervention and the next steps
• the views of the teachers and staff involved on the support and intervention and the next steps
• the impact of the review process on the ongoing planning cycle for the next stage.

You need to consider to what extent you feel the review meetings in your setting/school/college achieve these aims.

The graduated approach will be successful in meeting the child or young person's need/s if everyone involved has high expectations and a commitment to ensure that progress will be made.

In instances where setting staff or parents, or a young person, consider an EHC assessment to be imperative then it is possible to apply for this without carrying out successive cycles of the graduated approach.

Section 36(8) of the Children and Families Act 2014 states that the Local Authority must assess where:
a) the child or young person **has or may have** special educational needs, and
b) it **may be** necessary for special educational provision to be made for the child or young person in accordance with an EHC plan.

Part of your role as SENCO is to ensure that you track the progress of learners with SEND and report on the learners' progress to parents and other stakeholders. Provision management with support you in this process.

You will need to ensure that you have an appropriate data management system in place for tracking. Your setting may use a commercially available system for tracking progress and it is important that you become conversant with the ways in which you can extract the data that will help you to evidence the progress of learners.

Teachers also need to be responsible for analysing the data of learners with SEND to ensure that they are making progress. The frequency of this analysis will be led by the requirements of the setting. You may need to support some members of staff to do this. At SEN Support tracking should be undertaken by the class/subject teacher but with SENCO monitoring and supporting. Responsibility is shared. When an EHC plan is in place, your monitoring role will be more focused and be aligned with other EHC planning and implementation requirements.

Some settings hold progress meetings to explore whether there are any trends in the data; for example, to explore the progress of the learners on the autism spectrum or those young people who are accessing a resourced provision. It also allows for individualised targets to be set as part of the graduated approach to SEND (please see Section 6 of this pack).

One example where you might demonstrate the impact of provision that has been put in place would be to take a baseline measure prior to an intervention, for example, a standardised score on a reading test. It might be you that undertakes this assessment or you might delegate this task to another member of staff who is familiar with the measure being used. The intervention would be run with fidelity to the programme and a post-intervention measure using the same test would be made.

The assessment needs to be robust in order to ensure that the results are not misleading. Teacher assessments will undergo a process of moderation so that there is a shared agreement that a learner is working at the level that has been identified by the teacher. It is helpful to know the percentage of pupils who are reaching age-related expectations.

You will need to present your data in a format that is clear and accessible. It is advisable to analyse your data to highlight key points when you are sharing this with others, for example, inspectors, governors and other senior leaders. Ofsted do not expect data to be presented in a specific way but you do need to use a format that has been agreed by your setting. It is always helpful to use graphs and show your data in a manner that allows it to be compared with other data, for example, your setting's educational progress compared to national progress data. The Department for Education publishes national datasets here:
https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/statistics
This is very helpful when you are writing reports about your setting's data compared to national datasets.

Resources

Assessment

There are a range of commercially available assessment tools. Providers such as G L Assessment
https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/

NFER Nelson
https://www.nfer.ac.uk/for-schools/free-resources-advice/assessment-hub
and Pearson
https://www.pearsonclinical.co.uk/
provide advice on assessment and sell a range of tools to support with this.

Interventions

Consideration should be given to the evidence-base for the interventions being implemented e.g:

http://www.interventionsforliteracy.org.uk/

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit

https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/whatworks

The graduated approach

For detailed guidance on the Graduated Approach please refer to the nasen miniguide 'SEN Support and The Graduated Approach' which is available here:
http://www.nasen.org.uk/resources/resources.sen-support-and-the-graduated-approach-inclusive-practice.html

Section 7:
The SENCO's role in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
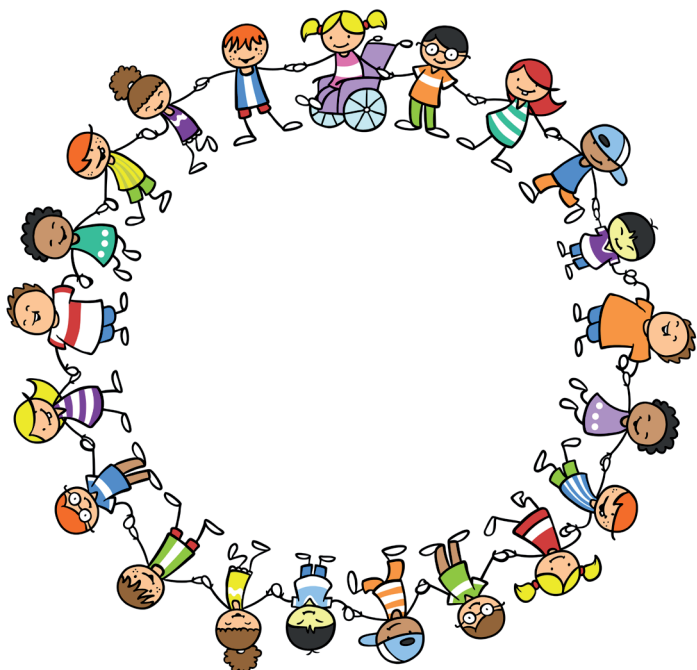
Local Authorities are responsible for assessing and drafting EHCPs. However, as a SENCO, you will be responsible for the co-ordination of some of the provision set out in the EHCP so it is important that you understand what it is and the process that underpins its production. The EHCP, once finalised, is a legal document and the contents of the plan are legally binding. The Plan describes a child or young person's special educational, health and care needs. The document outlines the provision to meet those needs and how it will support the child or young person to achieve their desired outcomes. You have a role in ensuring that these are in place as outlined in the Plan.

If a child or young person does not have an EHCP, it is possible to request a statutory assessment of a child or young person's education, health and care needs. Chapter 9 in the Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015) sets out the statutory assessment process. It is usually the SENCO's role to request statutory assessment on behalf of your setting, but others, including parents, can request an assessment.

Each Local Authority has its own system for requesting an assessment. It is important to develop a good relationship with your Local Authority and discuss what their expectations are in respect to the SENCO's role in the EHC assessment process as this can vary quite substantially across local authorities.

When involved in making an application, you will need to be very clear about the additional support that you are requesting from the Local Authority and what support your setting is able to provide from within its own resources. You should specify precisely what provision is being made,

for example, 'access to a one-to-one reading intervention for ten minutes each day' rather than 'access to a regular reading intervention'.

Once the request has been submitted, the Local Authority has to decide whether or not they will undertake the assessment and they must inform the parents of their decision within six weeks. If the Local Authority agrees to undertake the assessment, the timescale for completion is twenty weeks.

The young person and their families should be involved in the co-production of the EHCP. As part of the EHCP process, everyone involved will consider what the long-term outcomes for the child and young person should be. This means considering the aspirations for the child or young person's future and adult life. As the setting's SENCO, you have an important role in co-ordinating your setting's views on this.

If parents or the young person are unhappy about the provision specified in the EHCP and an agreement cannot be reached, there is the possibility that the Local Authority can be taken to SEND Tribunal. More information on this is available here:
https://www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/first-tier-tribunal-special-educational-needs-and-disability

The EHCP, once in place, should be reviewed on at least an annual basis.

The SENCO's role in Annual Reviews

As a SENCO, you have the responsibility to co-ordinate the Annual Reviews of the children or young people in your setting.

The EHCP must be reviewed annually to ensure that the provision specified is up-to-date and relevant to the child or young person's needs. The SEND Code of Practice is clear that the EHCP should be reviewed at least every twelve months (see Chapter 9 of the SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015) for more detailed guidance) but it can be reviewed more regularly than this if required.

The child or young person should be at the heart of the review and you must ensure that the review is carried out in partnership with the parents/carers.

The idea of the review meeting itself is to bring together everyone who is working to support the individual named in the plan. There is a discussion of how well the child or

young person is doing towards attaining the targets set at the last review. There is also a consideration of the new targets that should be set in order to enable the child or young person to reach the outcomes outlined in their plan.

You will need to set the date of the meeting ensuring that it is convenient for as many people as possible. You should co-ordinate the sending of invitations to the meeting and you will need to request written reports from a range of professionals as well as organise obtaining the child's or young person's views and parents'/carers' views. You need to remember that parents/carers are allowed to have someone with them as a supporter.

Some educational settings choose to use a person-centred review approach (please see Section 9 for more information). An annual review report should be produced following the meeting. Each Local Authority has its own paperwork that you are required to complete and submit. You will need to send a copy of the report to all parties within ten working days of the meeting taking place. The Local Authority must decide whether any amendments to the EHCP are required in light of the review. Once the parents/carers receive the Local Authority's response, they have fifteen working days to decide whether they disagree with any of the proposed changes.

Changes might be made if a child or young person's needs have changed significantly or if they are transitioning from one educational setting to another.

If a parent or carer decides that they do not agree with the change, they have the right to appeal to the SEND Tribunal.

Parent Carer Forums

The local parent carer forum is available to support families through all the stages outlined above. You might like to check that the families that you work with are aware of this. Details of your parent carer forum for your area are available on your local authority's Local Offer.

Information, Advice and Support for Families

Families have a legal right to Independent Advice and Support Services (IASS) and Local Authorities must signpost families to these. Further information can be found here: https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/information-advice-and-support-services-network

Resources

Outcomes

The Council for Disabled Children have designed a tool that supports with the outcomes process: https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/ehc-outcomes-pyramid
There are some helpful case studies on this website too: https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/independent-support/introducing-independent-support/real-stories-ground/aspirations-and-outcomes

Other organisations that can support families

You might like to check that the families that you work with are aware of the following:

The Independent Parental Special Education Advice IPSEA charity can advise and support parents. https://www.ipsea.org.uk/

Many local parent carer forums can help signpost families to local support and can help inform parents of local arrangements for supporting SEN. Parents can help shape local and national SEND services by inputting their views to their local parent carer forum. for details can be found here: http://www.nnpcf.org.uk/

Section 8: Monitoring and managing provision

You have an important role in monitoring the implementation and impact of the provision that is made to support children and young people with SEND in your setting. As a SENCO it is vital that you are aware of the tracking and assessment procedures that are in place for your school. School tracking that is in place at the start of an academic year is helpful as it provides a baseline from which you can measure the progress of all learners.

Through provision management you will be able to work with senior leaders and your SEND governor to ensure provision offers value for money, is evidence based and is thoroughly evaluated (Soan, 2017).

The SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015:6.76) states:

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.

Provision Mapping

The provision map is the process used to record the management of SEND provision. Documentation is used to record the process and inform future planning.

A provision map should detail the costed provision available in the setting; you will therefore need to know the SEND budget and work with your setting's business manager.

It is especially helpful when a provision map includes goal focused information, such as entry and exit criteria; for example, children with a reading age below X will normally receive an intervention. They will normally exit the intervention when they have a reading age of X.

The process of developing provision maps takes time and is likely to evolve as school needs change.

As a setting becomes more proficient at mapping provision it is likely that it will develop multiple provision maps organised in different ways for different purposes.

A list of some of the different ways to group provision is detailed below:
– inclusive provisions
– high quality teaching
– four broad categories of need
– whole school additional needs (i.e: SEND, EAL, PP, G&T, LAC and vulnerable groups)
– Waves 1-3
– class, year group, Key Stage
– targeted intervention
– SEN Support, EHCP
– medical needs and disabilities
– staff capability and confidence

Provision mapping might usefully be understood as a shared endeavour, managed by the SENCO, but contributed to by many; for example, a class teacher might be responsible for their own class provision map.

The steps to creating a successful provision management system

There will be a range of data available in school such as class tracking but you may supplement this with data from a variety of standardised assessment tools. You should be very clear as to why you are undertaking an assessment and whether the tool you are using is appropriate for what you are trying to find out about an individual's learning profile.

From the data that is available, it is important to identify where children might need some support that is additional to and different from High Quality Teaching. This might be an intervention programme or in-class support may be used to minimise the gaps in learning. Therefore, we look to the graduated approach to support in this process (please see Section 6).

In your role, you may work with the leadership team, class teachers and teaching assistants in progress review meetings or year group meetings to **assess** the needs of each learner. An audit of the desired support that would benefit identified learners is undertaken – this could be support for learning or emotional needs.

Once it has been agreed that some form of additional support is required everyone needs to **plan** what the best provision would be. It would be good practice to include views of student and their parents to help inform the assess, plan, do and review cycle in a person centred way.

Through monitoring and evaluation, your setting's inclusive in-class curriculum offer should meet the needs of most learners. However, it may be that an intervention programme might be required. By creating a map of the provision on offer all members of the school community can see the support that is in place for each individual.

When selecting interventions, it is advisable to choose programmes that have a strong evidence base; for example, you might like to refer to:
– Greg Brooks' *What works well for children with literacy difficulties*
– The Education Endowment Foundation provides evaluative information about interventions/approaches based on:
  1. their impact;
  2. the cost;
  3. the strength of the evidence base supporting the intervention/approach.

You will need to **plan** who will deliver the support and when they will do so. It is advisable to cost the provision too as this demonstrates how the school's budget is being spent and whether this is good value for money.

When the intervention is in place, the class teacher needs to ensure that interventions are being delivered effectively to the learners in their class as part of the '**do**' aspect of the Graduated Approach. Liaising with the teacher or teaching assistant delivering the provision is crucial. All staff involved must
• know the targets that the learners are working towards and
• be aware of the progress that each child/young person is making
• ensure that this is recorded and shared with all relevant staff as well as the parents/carers.

At the **review** stage, your role is to gather the progress data and other relevant information from all the members of staff involved in providing provision that is additional and different from the High Quality Teaching available in the setting. By evaluating the learners' progress, it is possible to see which interventions have been good value for money. This will need to be reported to the leadership team and the Governors.

During this evaluation, you might notice that further continuing professional development is required to support staff in the delivery of the provision.

The use of provision management also ensures that leaders are fully aware of the individualised support that has been put in place. A good provision management system is invaluable evidence to demonstrate the impact of all the provision that is additional to and different from the High Quality curriculum.

It is important to consider that provision management can also be used to enhance the quality and effectiveness of external service provision (e.g. that delivered with/by health and social care).

Resources

Gross, J. (2015) *Beating Bureaucracy in Special Educational Needs, 3rd Edition*, Abingdon: Routledge

See *What Works in School Based Interventions* (Gross, 2015:131– 136): Organised into primary and secondary interventions, it is further divided into the following areas: language, reading, spelling, writing, mathematics, memory, parenting programmes, social and emotional learning, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, autism, developmental coordination disorder.

There is a range of commercially available packages to support with managing provision such as Blue Hills provision management software:
https://www.bluehills.co.uk/
and
Capita SIMS https://www.capita-sims.co.uk/products-and-services/provision-map-writer.
This list is not exhaustive and other packages are available.

In addition to teacher assessments, you may use commercially available assessments. The following article provides a helpful list of assessments that you might like to consider:
https://www.tes.com/news/tests-every-sendco-should-have-their-assessment-toolkit-sponsored-article

Section 9: Working with children and young people

Working to include the views of the children and young people with SEND in your setting is at the heart of your role. This section will provide support and guidance to ensure that you are aware of the ways in which you can make your practice person-centred.

Current SEND practice and legislation reflects a belief that children and young people are informed experts on their own daily lives, and as such, should be consulted about matters affecting them.

Drawing from the principles set out in Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice emphasises the need (statutory duty for the Local Authority) to listen to the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person as well as involving them in a meaningful way in decision making.

Listening to the child's or young person's voice

Children and young people with SEND should feel confident they will be listened to and have their views valued. There is, however, a balance to be struck between seeking the voice of the child and overburdening them with decision making procedures. Parents and carers may often represent the views of the child.

It is important that children and young people are involved in decision-making about their learning, additional provision, extended services, and lives in general because if they are not, they will only receive what others think they want.

Where early years settings and primary schools have encouraged children to share their views on a range of topics and make decisions about the things that affect them, these formative experiences can be positively built upon during secondary/post 16 education. Preparing for adulthood should be considered at every stage of learning and suggested reading and resources can be found in the resources section.

When preparing for adulthood, young people will be thinking about what they want for their own lives regarding:
• higher education and/or employment
• independent living
• participation in society
• being as healthy as possible in adult life.

(DfE and DoH, 2014 (updated 2015): 7.38)

Young people between the age of sixteen and twenty-five have distinct rights under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015). These rights are independent of parental rights. From the age of sixteen, young people have the right to make decisions about their Education, Health and Care Plan. There is further information here:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-19-to-25-year-olds-entitlement-to-ehc-plans

If they are unhappy with the provision that is being made for them, they have a right to complain:
https://www.sendpathfinder.co.uk/send-complaints-a-guide-for-young-people-in-education

The right to have a voice

The benefits to the child or young person of expressing their views are that it:

- develops a child's positive sense of self and provides an opportunity to articulate and develop their own identity
- is supportive of the child/young person's ability to see themselves as a problem solver with agency and power over their own life
- offers opportunity to be a curious, creative and reflective thinker
- encourages the development of social competences and the forging of new relationships
- develops an inquiring reflexive mind
- is supportive of independence.

(Cheminais, 2006; Noyes, 2005; Goepel, *et al*. 2015).

In turn, listening to the viewpoints of children or young people with SEND encourages others to see the person as a unique individual with knowledge and understanding about their own life and valuable things to say.

For more information on this topic see:
Goepel, J., Chiderhouse, H., Sharpe, S. (2015) *Inclusive Primary Teaching: A critical approach to equality and special educational needs and disability*, Northwich: Critical Publishing, pages 219-233

Eliciting pupil voice

There are many different ways to elicit children/young people's views; below are some different ideas. Those strategies which involve non-verbal communication can be very useful to use as an introduction to communication for both verbal pupils and those who communicate through other means. A child or young person, in addition to using Augmentative and Alternative Communication, may well benefit from advocacy or other peer/adult support to help express their views.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

AAC can be no tech, low tech and high tech:

- *No tech AAC* is a non-verbal communication which involves no additional resources; for example, a communication through gesture, or signing
- *Low tech AAC* is a non-verbal communication that does not rely on the use of technology; for example, the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) where children/young people communicate through the sharing of pictures/symbols

- *High tech AAC* is a non-verbal communication that relies on the use of technology. For example, buttons that speak when pressed, to high tech communication systems.

For more information search the *Communication Matters* website:
https://www.communicationmatters.org.uk/

Drawings

Children/young people might be asked to draw something as a method of communication; the drawing may be a standalone activity, or the starting point for a conversation.

Gestures and eye-pointing

Pictures, symbols and photographs can all be pointed at or otherwise indicated to communicate pupil preferences.

Photographs and guided tours

Pupils can take others on a guided tour through a school; the tour might include their favourite places, activities they enjoy and those they do not. Similarly, pupils could take photographs of significant places and sort these as part of a dialogue with others.

Metaphors

Different sounds, colours, speeds and textures can all be used as metaphors to communicate meaning. For example, a child might clap their hands loudly and quickly to communicate a good experience or choose a piece of sandpaper from a swatch of materials to express discomfort.

Rating scales and smiley/sad face cards

Numbered rating scales, RAG rating (red, amber, green) and smiley/sad face cards can all be used as a quick and simple way to hear pupils' perspectives.

Small world boxes

An old shoe box can be utilised by a pupil to create a miniature representation of an aspect of their environment (home, classroom). The small world box might then become a resource for further dialogue with the child/young person.

For a range of other creative ways to elicit children/young people's voices see:

The Evaluator's Cookbook (University of Bath) available at:
http://www.bath.ac.uk/marketing/public-engagement/assets/the_evaluators_cookbook_participatory_evaluation_exercises_for_young_people.pdf

Person-centred planning

A key strategy for eliciting the voice of the child or young person is the person-centred approach to planning. This process is underpinned by the principles outlined above.

Person-Centred Planning should:
• focus on the child or young person as an individual
• enable children and young people and their parents to express their views, wishes and feelings
• enable children and young people and their parents to be part of the decision-making process
• be easy for children, young people and their parents or carers to understand, and use clear ordinary language and images rather than professional jargon
• highlight the child or young person's strengths and capabilities
• enable the child or young person and those that know them best to say what they have done, what they are interested in and what outcomes they are seeking in the future
• tailor support to the needs of the individual
• organise assessments to minimise demands on families
• bring together relevant professionals to discuss and agree together the overall approach
• deliver an outcomes-focused and co-ordinated plan for the child or young person and their parents.

(DfE and DoH, 2014 (updated 2015): 9.22)

It is important to note that person-centred practice must apply to all children and young people with special educational needs. It is not used solely for those children and young people with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.

Practice may be more 'in depth' for those with EHC plans but the principles apply to a wider group. A key principle is that all children and young people can express views and be involved in meaningful decision making, and this is regardless of age and 'capacity.'

Setting up a person-centred meeting

A person-centred meeting is designed to feel supportive and be about just one thing – the person at the centre of the review. This meeting can be used for children and young people with a range of needs and is not designed exclusively for reviewing EHC plans.

A review meeting should take between an hour and an hour and a half to complete. It requires someone to act in the role of the facilitator; the facilitator agrees a set of ground rules with the group.

Attendance

Those in attendance at the person-centred review should be:
• the child or young person
• key people that are involved in supporting the child or young person
• anyone the person chooses to invite.

Environment

When setting up a room for a person-centred meeting, the chairs are usually organised in a circle facing large sheets of paper with key questions written on them. Refreshments are available and there may be music playing in the background or when people enter the room.

Starting the meeting

A person-centred meeting starts by recording who is present at the meeting. Those attending should introduce themselves in relation to who they are to the child/young person. This approach reinforces the person-centred element and helps everyone in the meeting feel of equal importance and relevance to the review. When people introduce themselves, it is often a good idea for them to share a positive comment about the person as part of their introduction. It is important to set out the purpose of the meeting and what you aim to achieve by the end of the meeting.

Monitoring established targets

If targets are already in place for the child/young person, discuss what progress has been made towards these. This is an opportunity to focus on what has been going well and where there have been challenges. If staffing has altered since the previous meeting this is a good time to check things have not been missed/overlooked in the handover of roles.

Key questions

The facilitator needs to ask those in the room to answer the key questions; if large paper and pens are provided, the answers might be written up and later discussed.

The key questions in a person-centred review should focus on:
• *Appreciation* – What is appreciated about the child/young person (i.e. what are the person's qualities and characteristics)?

- *Important now* – What is important to the child/young person at present?
- *Important in the future* – What is important to the child/young person in the future and what must be present in the future?
- *Best support* – Identify what is the best support (i.e. what do others need to know and do to meet this person's needs in a way that makes sense to them and fulfils the statutory requirements)?
- *Working/not working* – Focusing on the multiple perspectives of those attending the meeting, what is working and not working for the child/young person at the centre of the review?
- *Questions* – In relation to the child/young person at the centre of the review, what questions need answering?
- *Outcomes and Actions* – In relation to the child/young person at the centre of the review, what outcomes and actions are desirable?

Discussion

Once those attending the meeting have provided their answers to the key questions, a focused discussion takes place.

Information recording thus far should be used to assemble a child/young person's profile, or if one already exists, add to what is already known. Information about what is working and not working should be used to update the profile.

Looking at the desirable outcomes, an action plan should be drawn up. These outcomes will focus on a wide range of aspects of the child and young person's education, health and care needs. Lessons learnt from what works and what has been challenging need to be taken into consideration when developing the new future focused action plan.

Ensure that the child or young person has the opportunity to contribute. They can easily be relegated to the role of person-centred 'passenger' without careful facilitation.

Pupil profiles

Derived from a person-centred approach, pupil profiles contain key information about a child/young person. As a one-page profile they tend to include a photograph of the child/young person and three key pieces of information:
- What is liked and admired about the child or young person
- What is important to the child/young person
- What support helps the child/young person.

Some example profiles can be found here:
http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/one-page-profiles/

Pupil passports

Applying a person-centred approach, pupil passports and/or communication passports might be developed for some children and young people. These are suitable for all learners and not just those with an EHCP.

These are similar to one-page profiles but tend to include a wider range of information, for example:

the child or young person's name, their photograph, what the child or young person would like the reader to know about them, any areas that are challenging for the child and what support might help them to overcome this.

A sample pupil passport template is available here:
http://my.optimus-education.com/student-passport-template

Particular care should be taken with regard to ownership and sharing of 'passport' information. For example, pinning information to a class noticeboard is likely to be inappropriate.

• Name:_____

• DoB: _____

• Photo:

• Date started at the school: _____

• SEN Support/EHCP:_____

• SEN Support began: _____

• I enjoy: _____

• I learn best when: _____

• I communicate by: _____

• To communicate with me you need to:_____

• What helps me: _____

• I'd like you to know that: _____

• I find it difficult to: _____

• My parents think that:_____

• I will support myself by: _____

• Others can support me by: _____

• My recent achievements are: _____

• My targets are: _____

• Additional information:_____

Section 10: Working in partnership with parents, carers and others

This section of the pack will provide you with information on how to work effectively with families and agencies.

A fundamental part of your role involves collaboration with others:
– the child/young person themselves (please see Section 9 of this induction pack);
– the child/young person's parents/carers;
– your setting's senior staff, practitioners/teachers/lecturers and support staff;
– outside agencies;
– voluntary and charity sector.

Effective partnership working is essential to ensure children and young people with SEND and their families have their views heard and receive the support they need.

This way of working is embedded within both the Children and Families Act (2014) and the SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015); please see Section 4 on legislation and guidance in this induction pack.

Family centred partnership

A family centred approach for learners of all ages places the child or young person and the family at the heart of the SEND process. It relies on parents/carers and children/young people with SEND being actively involved in the decisions that affect them. Their engagement should occur at both a personal and strategic level.

Parents and carers are not part of one homogenous group. A 'one size fits all' approach will not meet their needs or engender productive partnerships. Settings need to take time to get to know parents/carers, value their expertise as individuals and perceive them as central to the decision-making process for their child. In addition to this, settings are required to meet with and report to parents and carers on a regular basis (DfE and DoH, 2015:6.64, 6.65).

You must be able to communicate positive attitudes and understand different cultural perspectives as well as take account of any access requirements that families might have.

Sometimes both parents may hold differing views. Sometimes these are deep set in their own values and it is not always possible to obtain a consensus.

It is helpful to raise awareness with parents of the various support groups and charities that can help them. This can empower families and alleviate the demands on SENCO time. The support will look different in every Local Authority area so it is a good idea to engage with the local Parent Carer Forum. Many of these offer focus groups and will be prepared to engage in coffee mornings in school or maybe present at an evening event, e.g. a number of Parent Carer Forums offer workshops on understanding the EHC process and preparing personal profiles.

Try to review your SEN Information Report with parents from your school to ensure it is in an accessible format. Consider inviting your local parent group along to assist parents with this. This will ensure that reports are meaningful and informative for parents and families. This will develop a sense of co-ownership.

The benefit of a Parent Carer Forum is that parents are able to network with other parents of children and young people with SEND. Where schools help parents network, it can go a long way to building trust.

Parents/carers need to be given the opportunity to express both their satisfaction and dissatisfaction. A 'structured conversation' can be a useful way to address parental/carer dissatisfaction and move toward more positive actions which should ultimately benefit the child/young person.

Structured conversations

A structured conversation is an approach that allows for a staged dialogue comprising of a number of strategic steps. The approach was designed as part of the National Strategies' *Achievement for All* (DCFS, 2009) project. The staged process is designed to:

Explore – during this phase of the conversation the aim is to gain a clear understanding of the parents'/carers' perspectives. The listener is encouraged to actively listen and check their understanding is accurate through the use of paraphrasing.
Focus – during this phase of the conversation the aim is to work collaboratively with the parents/carers to identify priorities and clarify the key issues.
Plan – during this phase of the conversation the aim is to agree targets, define the desired outcomes and develop an action plan.
Review – during this phase of the conversation the aim is to summarise the meeting and clarify the next steps and further communications.

For more information see:
Department for Children, Families and Schools (DCFS) (2009) *Achievement for All: The structured conversation handbook to support training*, London: DCFS (01056-2009BKT-EN) [accessed October 2018]
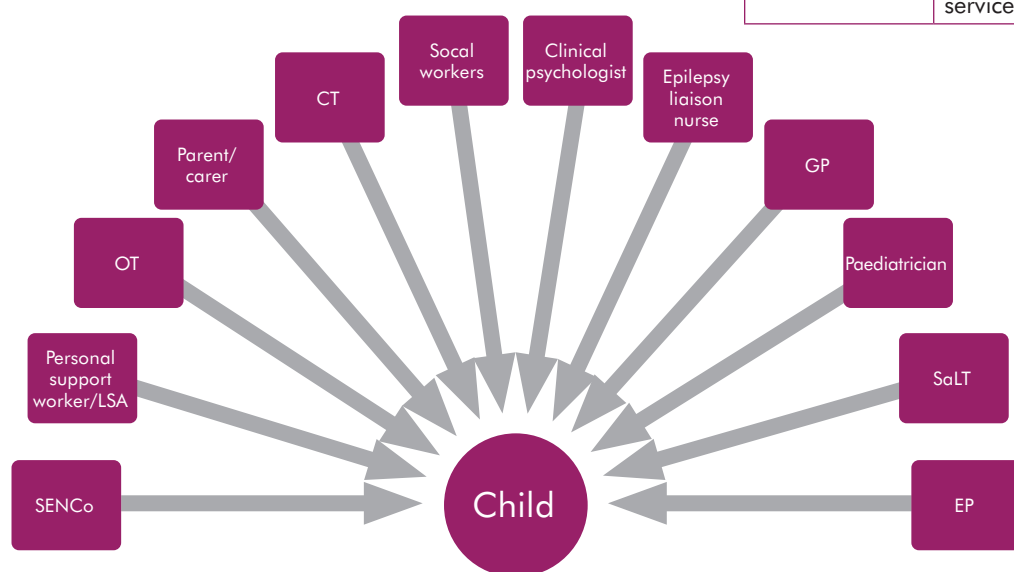http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/2418/

Working with multiple people

Sometimes, when a child or young person is supported by multiple people, the service provided can become disjointed. Different support agencies are likely to have different working practices and protocols which may not be compatible with each other. A range of support agencies can be working independently with or on behalf of a child, offering their best advice but without a holistic and complete understanding of the child, or any knowledge of the work other professionals are also doing with the child or young person.

For example, for the child with epilepsy depicted in the diagram below there are no lines of communication between health, education and social care services, and no communication between professionals in the same service (i.e. the Educational Psychologist, the Speech and Language Therapist and the Occupational Therapist). As a result, advice provided for the child/young person may overlap or even contradict. The effect of this approach results in the child becoming an object, not seen as a whole person but rather subdivided into sections organised around the professional services they come into contact with. In addition to which, the parent/carer and child/young person will need to communicate the same overarching information on numerous occasions to multiple services and individuals.

It can be valuable to review these reports in partnership with parents. Many are willing to spend time researching for available resources of information relevant to their child's needs. Families are generally the constant in children's lives and parents will be aware of how the observations were made. This can be crucial as children will behave differently in different settings.

Parents and Parent Carer Forums can be a really useful partner for schools to embrace. The Forums will have developed relationships with the Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group, health partners and the local voluntary sector. They also link in with the National Network of Parent Carer Forums and are often aware of national initiatives that may be of benefit to schools and parents and carers of children and young people with SEND.

An effective model of working together to meet the needs of children/young people who are supported by multiple agencies is set out below and is based on four levels of joined up working.

Outlining four levels of joined up working, Frost's (2005) model incorporates greater levels of collaboration than that depicted in the illustration below.

Co-operation	At this first level of joined up working there is an aim to achieve **co-operation** between services. In contrast to the Figure below information is now shared between services, but each service maintains its full independence.
Collaboration	At the second level there is an emphasis placed on **collaboration** between services. Like the **co-operative** stage services retain their independence and share information, but there is an emphasis on planning together with other services to address issues which overlap (thus aiming to avoid duplication and also conflicting approaches).
Co-ordination	At the third level an emphasis is placed on systematic working between services. At this level of joined up working, services are now **co-ordinated** at a strategic level; goals are shared and understood, and crucially different services take into account one another's values, finances and expectations.
Integration	At the fourth level there is **integration** of services, this means different services now become one organisation in order to enhance service delivery.

Adapted from Soan (2005:71)

As the demands of joint commissioning require local authorities to strategically approach planning and service delivery, co-operation, collaboration, co-ordination and integration can be a useful lens through which to view the working partnerships you are engaged with.

Recent research with families into the process of developing multi-professional Education, Health and Care Plans highlights:
– the difference one proactive professional makes when they take ownership of the process, providing information, advice and support;
– the difference an LA-run dedicated specialist support centre can make. Staff at the centre work with families to guide them through the process of getting an EHC plan;
– the importance of having an EHC plan ready before a transition. Parents/carers described the EHC plan as leading to meaningful communication with the proposed setting;
– the importance of sustained face-to-face contact between the family and professionals. Families who met more than once with the professionals inputting into their plan described this process as leading to a number of productive collaborative behaviours;
– the importance of involving the child/young person in a meaningful manner.

(Adams, *et al*, 2018).

Reflection

In what ways might the partnership working you are involved with be enhanced to promote family and person-centred approaches which secure improved outcomes for children and young people?

Developing effective partnerships

The development of effective partnership working takes time and investment from all involved. Those engaged in partnership working will need to:
– be prepared to re-visit and challenge existing practice, setting assumptions and preconceived ideas to one side;
– be open to new ideas and prepared to think differently. They may need to be willing to try new approaches and accommodate different ways of thinking and being;
– learn from one another, listening to other's perspectives and valuing other's attributes;
– evaluate current thinking and practice and plan to create useful new group understandings and ways of working together;
– recognise relationships and see connections between potentially disparate ideas and approaches. It will be useful to ensure that consideration is given to the 'big picture' as well as the specific details;
– establish their shared purpose – through ongoing dialogue a consideration of a group's aims and actions will need agreeing.

An effective partnership should be more than the sum of its parts.

In view of the wide range of services and agencies you are likely to be interacting with, it is advisable to develop your own service directory:

Service/ agency	Key contact name	Contact details	Service provided	Additional notes

Soan, 2017:95

Reflection

Thinking about your own setting, it might be useful to reflect on the extent to which partnership working embraces the principles outlined above. Where there are areas for development, how might these be addressed? How often do you meet with various partners? How effective are these meetings? Do you have wider partnership meetings? Do you need to meet more frequently?

Section 11: The SENCO working with support staff

In this section you will explore your role in working with support staff. You will need to know who the members of the support staff team are in your school and how decisions are made about their deployment.

Teaching assistants (TAs) can be a vital element of a child/young person's education; however, robust research into the *Deployment and Impact of Support Staff* (DISS) (Blatchford *et al.*, 2009) highlighted a number of critical issues:

– teachers have often not received training to deploy TAs;
– teachers and TAs often do not have allocated time to jointly plan and engage in post lesson feedback and reflection;
– teachers are often detached from the planning and preparation of intervention sessions delegated to TAs;
– the more contact pupils have with support staff the less individual attention they have from teachers;
– TAs tend to support children in small groups, or 1-1; the support they provide is generally for pupils who the teacher defines as lower achieving;
– pupils with a label of special educational needs are routinely taught for much of their time by TAs; in this sense TAs are providing alternative, rather than additional, support;
– TAs' interaction with pupils (compared to that of teachers') tends to be more concerned with task completion rather than learning and understanding. Perhaps due to a lack of planning time, TAs often operate in a reactive rather than proactive way, responding to the immediate demands of the lesson/the pupil;
– TAs have a positive effect on teachers' workload, level of job satisfaction and stress levels.

Following the publication of the DISS project (Blatchford *et al.*, 2009), Blatchford, Russell and Webster (2012, 2015) have provided further analysis on the deployment, preparedness and practice of TAs. http://maximisingtas.co.uk/assets/content/edtareport-2.pdf and http://maximisingtas.co.uk/research/the-edta-project.php.

The Education Endowment Foundation's guidance report on the effective deployment of classroom support staff, *Making best use of Teaching Assistants*, offers the latest evidence and makes a number of recommendations to help schools make the best use of their Teaching Assistants. The guidance can be found here: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/making-best-use-of-teaching-assistants/

This report makes seven recommendations in relation to classroom and out of class interventions.

The effective use of TAs under everyday classroom conditions
1. TAs should not be used as an informal teaching resource for low attaining pupils
2. Use TAs to add value to what teachers do, not replace them
3. Use TAs to help pupils develop independent learning skills and manage their own learning
4. Ensure TAs are fully prepared for their role in the classroom

The effective use of TAs in delivering structured interventions out of class
5. Use TAs to deliver high quality one-to-one and small group support using structured interventions
6. Adopt evidence-based interventions to support TAs in their small group and one-to-one instruction

Integrating learning from everyday classroom contexts and structured interventions
7. Ensure explicit connections are made between learning from everyday classroom teaching and structured interventions

The government has published school workforce planning guidance to support schools with making the best use of their resources to improve outcomes for pupils: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-workforce-planning

Reflection

To evaluate the impact of TAs in your setting, it is helpful to gain multi-layered data about their deployment, practice and preparedness; to this effect, the list below provides some starting points for analysis.

– Through discussion or questionnaire, gain an understanding of the teachers' and TAs' views regarding TA deployment, preparedness and practice.
– Conduct a learning walk to gain an overall understanding of the TA role in your setting. For example, you might focus on: *How are TAs deployed (intervention, small group, 1-1, non-contact preparation time)? Which pupils are TAs working with? What is the impact of TA work on pupil learning?*
– Gain a clear understanding of proportions of time children/young people on the SEN register are spending with TAs and teachers. Analyse this data alongside pupil progress data.
– Review teachers' planning documents, focus on the nature and clarity of TA deployment.

– Gain an understanding of the progress made by pupils in intervention sessions and whether teachers utilise this information in their lesson planning
– Gain an understanding of the time available for teachers and TAs to share information, discuss planning and issues relating to pedagogy.
– Review the training completed by, available to, and requested by TAs; compare this list with the needs of pupils in your school.
– Review the training available for teachers to deploy TAs in pedagogical roles.
– Review TA job descriptions in your setting (focus specifically on the pedagogical element).

(Cheminais, 2015:100; Wearmouth, 2016:179)

Once you have gathered this multi-layered data, analyse what is working well in your setting with regard to TAs and identify any areas for development. Based on your analysis, work with staff to enhance the effectiveness of TAs in your setting. In addition to which, see the *TA Deployment Review*: http://maximisingtas.co.uk/our-services.php

Resources

Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants (MITA):
http://maximisingtas.co.uk/

Making best use of Teaching Assistants:
http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/
guidance-reports/making-best-use-of-teaching-assistants

The Whole School SEND TA Review guide:
http://maximisingtas.co.uk/projects/whole-school-send.php

Section 12: The role of the SENCO in leading Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Continuous professional development (CPD) is the means by which people maintain and improve their knowledge and skills related to their professional lives.

Building capacity amongst colleagues to remove barriers to participation and promote high expectations through the development of inclusive practice is a key aspect of the SENCO role. When planning effective CPD, it can be useful to first think about the CPD you and others have attended.

Consider these two questions about CPD:
1. When has the CPD you or others have attended been effective; what were the factors making it effective?
2. When has the CPD you or others have attended been ineffective; what were the factors contributing to the ineffectiveness?

Underpinnings of effective CPD for SEND:
• Supportive of the progress of children/young people
• Driven by core values regarding inclusive practice
• Linked to your school's overall aims/objectives (whole school action plan)
• Linked to your own SENCO action plan
• Relevant to the group
• Supportive of staff development (i.e. facilitative of new ways of thinking and acting)
• Grounded in relevant theory and linked to current legislation
• Accessible and pitched at the right level
• Linked to effective school practice.

Leading effective CPD

There are many practical actions you could take to develop SEND CPD in your setting. When deciding what to do first, it is worth remembering that:

'The most effective way to support all teachers to meet their statutory responsibilities for SEN is not through intensive, 'expert' input, which reinforces the notion that SEN is something different and difficult, but through **collaboration and collaborative learning focused on developing a clear understanding of key principles of good teaching**' (Ekins, 2015:43).

Audit of pupil need

As a leader of effective SEND CPD, you need to ensure your colleagues are able to remove barriers for pupils experiencing SEND in your setting. This requires you to know the link between pupils' needs and staff expertise.

Starting with the children/young people, establish a system for maintaining an up-to-date list of the needs of children on your SEND register and your medical conditions register.

Audit of staff skills and need

To conduct a comparison between pupils' needs and staff expertise you will need an understanding of staff skill levels and areas for development. When auditing staff expertise you need to establish two things:
1. In which areas do staff feel most confident?
2. Where do staff feel they have training needs?

There are sample SEND CPD audits/questionnaires in the following texts:
– Cheminais, R. (2015) *Rita Cheminais' Handbook for SENCOs, 2nd Edition*, London: Sage, p.84
– Edwards, S. (2016) *The SENCO Survival Guide: The nuts and bolts of everything you need to know, 2nd Edition*, Abingdon: Routledge, 51
– Packer (2015) Packer, N. (2014) *The Perfect SENCO*, Carmarthen: Independent Thinking Press, 85-86

Freely available audit tools:
Search online for 'SEN CPD Audit – Natalie Packer' or 'SEND CPD Audit SENplus Ltd' for two freely downloadable audit tools.

When choosing to use any published SEND CPD audit tool it is recommended you review the document and adapt where necessary to suit your setting.

Coaching

SENCOS can use coaching as a way of enabling a professional to develop an aspect of their practice. It can take on a number of formats from informal to specialist, self-coaching to team coaching and collaborative peer-coaching.

Coaching aims to help an individual or group identify new ways to improve their practice, reflecting on what is effective and how practice might be developed.

Coaching may be a useful way to support teachers and TAs to achieve their inclusion/SEND-specific performance management objective.

Coaching and related support activities requires time. You will need to ensure that you have non-contact time to enable this to happen effectively. You will need to discuss this time commitment with your leadership team.

There is detailed information available about coaching online from the National Framework for Coaching and Mentoring:
http://www.curee.co.uk/national-framework-and-resources

For more information see:
Cheminais, R. (2015) *Rita Cheminais' Handbook for SENCOs, 2nd Edition*, London: Sage, 94-97

Collaborative staff development

SENCOs should be involved in staff development. Collaborative staff development might be utilised for key stage, department or whole school development. Once an area for development has been identified (perhaps as a result of a focused learning walk or in response to an audit of staff need) the development theme will be worked on over a sustained period.

The development theme may be addressed initially through a targeted inset day and then, crucially, discussed regularly throughout a term/school year. Ten minutes per week of a staff meeting might usefully be devoted to the development area, as well as the use of other strategies mentioned in this section, for example, learning walk, learning wall, team teaching, video analysis, etc.

Discussion

Meeting with staff to facilitate a reflective discussion about effective practice for children with SEND can be a useful way to support staff development. The simple action of having a purposeful discussion about inclusion and SEND can allow both you and another to:
– define what's working and why;
– establish new desired outcomes and actions which will enhance practice.

Joint planning

Working with colleagues to plan sessions can allow for the sharing of good ideas and the identification of challenges and possible solutions. Colleagues might discuss:
• ways of making a session accessible to all
• the voice of the child/young person
• ways of monitoring and supporting progress in the moment for children with a label of SEND
• effective deployment of TAs
• opportunities for children to work on their targets
• opportunities for children to transfer learning gained in an intervention group to the wider classroom context
• ways to engage parents
• subject specific vocabulary
• ways to facilitate pre-teaching, including the prior sharing of topic work with parents.

Lesson Study

Lesson Study is a model of teacher-led practitioner research which aims to support professional development and facilitate reflective practice. Popular in Japan, the approach engages a small group of teachers in co-planning a series of lessons based on a shared learning goal for the pupils. Once co-planning is complete, one teacher from the group leads the lesson whilst the others observe. Feedback from the observers to the lead focuses on pupils' learning rather than teacher practice. Drawing on the observers' comments, the team then develop and enhance their practice.

Further information can be found online by searching for:
– Education Endowment Foundation – Lesson Study
– Teacher Development Trust – What is Lesson Study?
– TES – Lesson Study – are you doing it right?

– http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/education/
   thinkingschools/resourcesforteachers/lesson_study/
Online publication (pdf)
Education Endowment Foundation (2017) *Lesson Study Evaluation report and executive summary November 2017*, [accessed October 2018]
https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projectsand-evaluation/projects/lesson-study/

Learning wall

A learning wall can be set up in for the promotion of staff development. The learning wall might be devoted to SEND/inclusion in general terms or given over to a specific topic; for example, establishing productive partnerships with parents/carers.

It is generally a good idea to establish a staff rota for adding information to the learning wall, the expectation being that each teaching team post something every half term or term on the learning wall.

The learning wall can become a 10-minute focus for each weekly staff meeting.

A learning wall might include:
– photographs of activities
– examples of planning
– resources
– questions
– articles
– pupil evaluations
– staff evaluations.

For more information see:
Ekins, A. (2015) *The Changing Face of Special Educational Needs: Impact and implications for SENCOs, teachers and their schools, 2nd Edition*, London: Routledge, 49-50

Learning walks

A learning walk is a way to create a snapshot of learning and teaching in a setting. It is a structured, collaborative approach for gathering evidence of progress against a specific area or target.

The purpose for completing a learning walk might be to:
• monitor practice
• share good practice
• promote consistency across a setting, or identify distinctions that should be made as pupils develop and move through and between a Key Stage
• raise awareness of a specific area
• check for pupil progress
• stimulate reflective professional discussions.

Learning walks can be conducted by a single person, or a group; for example: you might conduct a learning walk with a member of SLT, SEN governor and a SENCO from another school.

Conducting a learning walk:
• Establish the set focus including defining the observable evidence
• Decide the areas to visit, arrange over a half-day and publish a timetable so people know when to expect you
• Utilise observation templates, confirm the process, purpose and protocols
• If walking as a group, allocate roles; for example, one person might focus on learning and teaching, another the environment, another pupil work, and another pupil voice. After the walk, share and triangulate the evidence gathered
• Compile a report of evidence to present to HT/SLT and governors
• Feedback to staff and discuss.

For a learning walk record sheet see:
Cheminais, R. (2015) *Rita Cheminais' Handbook for SENCOs, 2nd Edition*, London: Sage, pp.148, 150-152

Mentoring

SENCOS can use mentoring as part of their repertoire of staff development tools. Mentoring has similarities with coaching but is used more specifically to support professionals as they move through significant career transitions. As such, a SENCO might mentor: Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), staff who are new to the setting, a new subject co-ordinator wishing to address inclusion and SEND in relation to their subject area, a more experienced

member of staff who requires support with challenging behaviour, etc. It is important that you are able to identify someone who can be your mentor too.

Mentoring can comprise of a range of activities and is most effective when tailored to the specific needs of the mentee. Mentoring might include:
• identifying learning goals
• modelling good practice
• observing the mentee
• discussion about practice
• provision of guidance and feedback
• reviewing progress
• appraisal
• brokering access to further CPD (i.e. visiting other schools).

For more information see:
Cheminais, R. (2015) *Rita Cheminais' Handbook for SENCOs, 2nd Edition*, London: Sage, 96-98

Outreach/inreach

Other schools in your local area might have outreach workers specialised in providing advice on specific topics, for example, autism, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), etc. Typically, an outreach worker will visit your setting and provide specific advice and guidance about an area related to their expertise or they may support your setting with the removal of barriers for one specific pupil/group. Outreach work is often provided by special schools to support mainstream schools.

Inreach works in a similar way, but this time you/a member of your setting visit the inreach worker's setting to observe an aspect of best practice.

Teaching schools and teaching alliances in your area will also provide similar kinds of support.

Other SEND/inclusion CPD strategies

• Inset
• Inclusion/SEND information sheets (available in paper format or on a school's intranet)
• Peer observation
• Peer modelling
• Team teaching (co-teaching)
• Video analysis of lessons/activities/playtime/lunchtime
• Recommendation Monday – share a weekly inclusion/ SEND idea every week

• Share a pupil case study during a staff meeting and discuss strategies for support
• Invite parents to contribute to training, e.g. developing a blog or running a workshop session.

Questions to support you with developing effective CPD

The following questions are designed to support you in the process of developing your setting's inclusion/SEND CPD:
• How are you going to decide on the focus of your CPD? *For example, you might: audit the needs of your setting (pupils and staff); plan CPD to target a development area on the whole school action plan/your SENCO action plan; meet with individuals/teams to discuss their training needs.*
• Once you have selected a focus area, how are you going to gain a good understanding of the precise training need? *For example, you might: conduct a learning walk which addresses your chosen focus area; utilise school data; conduct further discussions with your school community (pupils, staff, parents, etc).*
• What will be your success criteria? *Prior to planning CPD, it can be useful to establish what progress you are seeking for your setting. Think about the behaviours, understandings and actions you desire of those in your school community that will denote success.*
• What CPD needs to take place in order to achieve your success criteria? *For example, you might: group teachers for lesson study; systematically go through the IDP materials drawing out the recommendations for improving practice, following which plan some collaborative staff development; mentor/coach staff; draw on the expertise of your outreach worker to advise and guide specific staff.*
• What negotiations need to take place with others regarding: timings, location and planning? *For example, if planning for an outreach worker to visit your setting: have you agreed the focus of the visit, discussing and communicating this with relevant staff? Has time been allocated for key staff to meet outside of class teaching time for feedback, discussion and planning?*
• How are you going to evaluate the success of CPD, and what will be your next steps? *For example, you might; conduct another learning walk, meet with teams to discuss pupil progress data, draw on evidence presented on the Learning Wall; speak with staff about the outcome of their coaching.*

Resources

For more information about the CPD you might offer:

Soan, S. (2017) The SENCO *Essential Manual*,
Maidenhead: Open University Press, section 2.3, pp 26-29

In Section 2.3 Soan (2017) poses a number of questions which will help you think about matching children and young people's needs to the training of staff in your setting and the associated costings.

Useful training resources

There are a range of published CPD materials already available, so you don't have to start from the beginning with no assistance. It is generally advisable to adapt training materials to suit your setting's needs, rather than introduce them without alteration.

Departmental advice on the Equality Act 2010 and schools is available at
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf

Advanced training materials for autism; dyslexia; speech, language and communication; emotional, social and behavioural difficulties; moderate learning difficulties
These training materials were commissioned in response to a Government recommendation, following the Lamb Inquiry (2009).

The materials consist of five learning modules covering: autism, dyslexia, speech, language and communication, emotional, social and behavioural difficulties (now SEMH), and moderate learning difficulties.

Although some of the terminology has changed, the advice is still relevant and useful.

The advanced training materials are freely available online on the nasen SEND Gateway:
http://www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources.advanced-training-materials-for-autism-dyslexia-speech-language-and-communication-emotional-social-and-behavioural-difficulties-moderate-learning-difficulties_1.html

**Collaborative learning for SEN:
The role of the SENCO**
This guidance aims to support early years providers, schools and further education settings to continue improving their approaches to CPD for the benefit of children/young people with a label of SEND.

The booklet focuses on:
• Why CPD for SEN is important
• Key principles of effective CPD
• Exploring models of good practice
• Assess, plan, do, review.

This booklet is freely available online on the nasen SEND Gateway:
http://www.sendgateway.org.uk/r/collaborative-learning-for-sen-the-role-of-the-senco1.html

Focus On SEND CPD
The Focus On SEND CPD materials are an online training resource which aims to help teachers and educational practitioners working across the 0 to 25 age range develop high quality SEND practice.

The modules explore:
• High quality practice and what this means for SEND
• The participation and engagement both of children or young people and their parents and families
• Identifying needs and the role of assessment the process for arriving at meaningful outcomes
• Meeting needs and how the cycle of assess, plan, do, review can be used to best effect.

The Focus On SEND CPD materials are freely available online on the nasen website:
http://oln.nasen.org.uk/

Inclusion Development Plan (IDP)
A suite of materials aimed at supporting teachers, teaching assistants and trainee teachers to remove barriers for children/young people with:
• Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (now referred to as Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs)
• Autism
• Speech Language and Communication Needs
• Dyslexia.

The materials are designed for practitioners in the early years, primary and secondary settings.

The IDP materials are freely available online on the nasen SEND Gateway:
http://www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources.inclusion-development-programme-idp.html

Ekins (2015:45-48) provides two case study examples which demonstrate ways staff can use the IDP materials to embed principles of good quality inclusive teaching, as opposed to reinforcing a pedagogy which promotes SEN strategies as separate from the teaching and learning of the rest of the school.

nasen online
nasen online includes a series of YouTube videos that you might share with staff.

The nasen online YouTube video material is freely available online at YouTube nasenonline website:
https://www.youtube.com/user/Nasenonline/videos

Quality of life
This online module focuses on understanding how the quality of life for children and young people with severe, profound and complex learning difficulties and disabilities can be enhanced.

The Quality of Life materials are freely available online on the nasen SEND Gateway:
http://www.sendgateway.org.uk/r/quality-of-life_1.html

SEND Gateway
The nasen SEND Gateway is an online portal offering education professionals free access to information, resources and training for meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

When planning any training, it is useful to have a look at the SEND Gateway for up-to-date information.

The materials housed on the nasen SEND Gateway are available online at:
http://www.sendgateway.org.uk/

An introduction to speech, language and communication
Published by the Communication Trust, this online course provides an introduction to speech, language and communication. Organised into four sections, you have the option to take the early years, primary, secondary and further education pathways.

The introduction to speech, language and communication materials are freely available online on the Communication Trust website, available at;
https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/projects/professional-development/online-short-course/

Training materials for teachers of learners with severe, profound and complex learning difficulties
Following a review by Toby Salt in 2010, these training materials were developed to support staff with their understanding of children described as having:
• Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)
• Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)
• Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (CLDD)

Although some of the terminology and legislation has changed, the advice is still relevant and useful.

The training materials are freely available online on the nasen SEND Gateway:
http://www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources.training-materials-for-teachers-of-learners-with-severe-profound-and-complex-learning-difficulties_1.html

Standard for teachers' professional development
A description of effective practice in professional development for teachers:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standard-for-teachers-professional-development

Section 13:
SENCO and practitioner wellbeing

This section of the SENCO induction pack summarises some key ways in which you can plan and take action to support your own wellbeing and that of other practitioners, and also signposts useful resources.

For practitioners working in schools and other educational settings, there is a growing focus on the need to recognise and provide for children and young people's social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. This is often placed under the banner of wellbeing. The wellbeing of practitioners is also important to consider, in order that their own mental health and wellbeing is such that they are able to support others.

Working to support the wellbeing of children and young people can often be assumed to be the responsibility of SENCOs and those working with children with Special Educational Needs and Disability. This is reinforced by the revised classification of need as Social, Emotional and Mental Health in the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2015). The role of the SENCO is demanding and it is important to consider your own physical and emotional well-being as well as that of your team.

It is important for practitioners, as well as their managers, to recognise that their ability to support the wellbeing of children and young people is closely linked to practitioners' own wellbeing.

This view is expressed in a positive way by Lovewell (2013:para12): 'Flourishing teachers create the foundations for learning to flourish'.

It is reported that teaching is one of the professions with a significantly higher rate of work-related stress than average (HSE, 2017). The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) recommendation is that employee health and wellbeing must be a core priority for senior management (NICE, 2016).

Key areas to consider in developing practitioner wellbeing

Control and realism

When taking action to improve your wellbeing, aim to concentrate on areas over which you have control. Consider what expectations you set yourself and whether they are realistic. Try not to set unachievable goals for yourself and others. Ensure that you and your leadership team has a clear shared understanding of the expectations of your role and your areas of responsibility.

Environment

The working environment can have a significant impact on wellbeing. Often, different people can thrive in different environments; as such, rather than taking a 'one-size-fits-all' approach, it may be useful to consider how the physical environment supports or inhibits the work of individuals, including your own working style.

Senior leadership

The SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015) recommends that SENCOs are a member of their setting's Senior Leadership Team. As a Senior Leader, you will be required to lead other practitioners, but the responsibility for wellbeing does not lie with you alone. Practitioner wellbeing should be part of your school/setting's development plan. Ensure that you discuss and plan any actions to support practitioner wellbeing alongside your Senior Leadership Team.

Physical activity

Being active can have a positive impact on wellbeing. Consider ways in which you/your setting makes space or provides opportunities for staff to engage in physical activity.

Policy/strategy

Having a wellbeing strategy and/or policy in an educational setting offers a number of advantages. It can help practitioners to be aware of what is being done to support their wellbeing; it can also help leaders to improve practice and take accountability for their actions.

Reflective practice

You might like to consider the extent to which you feel able to support learners with SEND. This approach to professional actions and outcomes can be useful for practitioners as it enables them to consider their work from a non-judgemental point of view and to consider a wide range on influences on their approach to their practice. Through reflective practice, practitioners can achieve a clear view of their professional lives, which can help them to take actions to improve their own wellbeing. There is a tool available to support you with this: https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/r/sendreflectionframework.html

Relationships

Relationships within and outside of work settings are key to promoting wellbeing. It is important to consider how you stay connected, and maintain relationships with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Within your setting, it is important to identify someone who is able to support you when you are dealing with difficult situations, for example, safeguarding issues. Is there somebody who might be available to talk through your concerns in a confidential and safe environment?

Resilience

There is a developing interest in resilience in education, with many publications appearing on the market. Whether you consider resilience to be about bouncing back after setbacks or about the ability to move forward and cope with challenges, resilience can offer a useful perspective upon practitioner wellbeing. It is extremely likely that as a practitioner you will encounter challenges and setbacks. As such, it may be useful to think about what resources you can call on to help you manage these situations.

Teamwork

Working together can have a significant positive effect on wellbeing in education settings. Conversely, where team-work is not working effectively, this can impact negatively on wellbeing. It may be useful to consider what teams exist in your setting, how teams are put together and what team-members understand to be their role within the teams to which they belong.

For you, teamwork can positively involve participation in local area network activity too. This can help to overcome the potential isolation associated with the role (only one person in a school/setting) really knows what it is like to be the SENCO.

Work/life balance

It can be easy to let the pressures and demands of work dominate the life of practitioners. Consider how you will ensure that you achieve a good work/life balance and make space and time for yourself at different times of the day. It may be useful to consider whether personal time is practical in your setting. Approaches such as mindfulness, yoga and meditation may be approaches to use to manage work/life balance.

Workload

Consider the workload demands of your role and the demands placed on practitioners in your setting. What avenues are open for practitioners to talk to someone about their workload and what systems are in place?

The Department for Education (DfE) has published the workload reduction toolkit. It provides accessible materials, including practical advice, tools and case studies designed to help all schools, including special schools, to address workload issues. It includes, for example, a workload charter from Ascent Trust that sets out what teachers and support staff can expect from the academy in respect of a fair and reasonable workload. The toolkit can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reducing-workload-in-your-school

Do you have administrative support? The 0-25 SEND Code of Practice is clear that the school should provide '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' (DfE and DoH, 2015:109).

The Department for Education has also undertaken a wide programme of work to reduce workload and details can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teachers-workload/reducing-teachers-workload

This includes a range of research and evidence including the 2016 Teacher Workload Survey, a follow-up survey in March 2018 and publication of 12 project reports and a summary report in March 2018 about the findings from collaborative school projects into reducing workload.

Consider if these would be useful strategies to help you improve your wellbeing.

Resources

ACAS
http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5031

ACAS provides information, advice, training, conciliation and other services for employers and employees to help prevent or resolve workplace problems

The 'Wellbeing and workplace performance' webpage offers a range of resources about wellbeing in the workplace

The DfE workload reduction toolkit
This can be found here:
https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/workload-reduction-toolkit

Education Support Partnership, 'Looking after Teacher Wellbeing'
https://www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk/looking-after-teacher-wellbeing

The Educational Support Partnership is an educational charity which supports the mental health and wellbeing of education staff and organisations. They offer a free 24-hour telephone and text helpline for practitioners. FREE HELPLINE 08000 562 561 Text: 07909341229.

The guide 'Looking after Teacher Wellbeing' offers a good overview of the topic.

Edutopia, '7 Self-Care Strategies for Teachers'
www.edutopia.org/discussion/7-self-care-strategies-teachers

The Edutopia website is hosted by the George Lucas Educational Foundation. It provides links to a range of resources and research, including items on the topic of teacher development. The resource provided by Alex Shevrin offers practical ideas for practitioner self-care.

The Emotional Literacy Support Assistants Network
www.elsanetwork.org

This website provides information about the approach of having trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistants in schools, to work with children with social, emotional & mental health needs. There is useful information about using a supervision approach to support the wellbeing needs of practitioners.

Heads Together/Mentally Healthy Schools website
www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/whole-school-approach/supporting-staff-wellbeing/

This website is a government supported resource. It focuses primarily on supporting children and young people, although it has a section dedicated to staff wellbeing. It provides a range of issues to consider and a range of links to other areas of support and resources.

Mindful Teachers
http://www.mindfulteachers.org

This website acts as an international community for teachers interested in using a 'mindfulness' approach to supporting their own wellbeing. It provides resources and links to help practitioners to develop mindful approaches to their professional lives.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)
https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng13/resources

NICE is a non-departmental public body, which is accountable to the Department of Health and Social Care, but is operationally independent. This website has a section on workplace health, with a range of resources which can support senior leaders to plan, implement and evaluate practice to promote practitioner wellbeing.

The NHS Moodzone website
www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/improve-mental-wellbeing/

This website provides general information about mental wellbeing and also has a useful model, called "Five Steps to Mental Wellbeing", which may be helpful as a way to structure your thinking around wellbeing in your setting.

'Supporting Staff Wellbeing in Schools', Anna Freud Centre for Children & Families
www.annafreud.org/media/7201/3rdanna-freud-booklet-staff-wellbeing-final.pdf

This booklet helps practitioners to look at staff wellbeing and provides a range of examples and case studies of successful practice. It also includes links to other publications about mental health in schools.

'The Wellbeing Toolkit 2' by Tina Rae (2016)

https://www.nurtureuk.org/publications/wellbeing-toolkit

This publication comes in the form of a large folder, with 20 separate topic booklets, which provides support for educational staff to feel confident in their knowledge of how to support the wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. It also includes sections on staff wellbeing.

Young Minds Website

https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/caring-for-the-wellbeing-of-teachers-and-school-staff/

Young Minds is a charity which promotes policy and practice to support the development of positive mental health for children and young people, in particular those who are vulnerable and excluded. This website includes a page which provides advice on supporting the wellbeing of practitioners.

Section 14: The SENCO, Ofsted and self-evaluation

It is important for SENCOs to know the quality of the school's provision and the framework under which it is inspected.

As a brief overview to support you in preparing for inspection and to evaluate the effectiveness of provision in your setting, there are two parts to this section:
• Considering the implications of the School Inspection Framework for you in your role.
• Thinking about the ways in which you can evaluate the provision in your school.

Knowing the quality of the provision in your setting is an important part of the strategic role of the SENCO. Self-evaluation is vital to ensure that you have a clear picture of what is happening in your school.

Your self-evaluation will allow you to draw up the priorities for long-term and short-term school development targets.

Self-evaluation tools such as the Whole School SEND Review Guide can support you to explore the areas that Ofsted might ask you about. This review guide is available on this link along with other helpful tools:
https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/whole-school-send/find-wss-resources.html

The School Inspection Framework: Section 5 and Section 8 Inspections of maintained schools

There are two types of inspection of maintained schools:
1. **Section 5 is a full inspection**. It means that the school is being inspected under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The handbook that inspectors use for this type of inspection is:
   https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif
2. **Section 8 inspections are carried for a range of purposes**. It means that the school is being inspected under Section 8 of the Education Act 2005. Section 8 inspections are carried out for good and non-exempt outstanding schools that have not been otherwise selected for a section 5 inspection.

Section 8 inspections might also take place as monitoring inspections for schools that require improvement, monitoring inspections for schools judged inadequate, inspections with no formal designation and unannounced behaviour inspections.

Non-exempt outstanding schools are special schools, pupil referral units and nurseries that have been previously judged as 'outstanding'.

The handbook that inspectors use for a Section 8 inspection is:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-8-school-inspection-handbook-eif

Independent Schools

Ofsted inspect all non-maintained special schools using the framework above.

Ofsted also inspects non-association independent schools. The guidance for inspecting these schools can be found here:
https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsteds-inspections-of-non-association-independent-schools

Other independent schools who are members of the Associations of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) are inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The ISI Framework for Inspection is available here:
https://www.isi.net/support/publications/isi-inspection-framework

What areas do Ofsted inspect?

Ofsted regularly reviews the framework for inspection. However, under the current framework, inspectors use a four-point scale to make judgements about these areas:
• the quality of education
• behaviour and attitudes
• personal development
• leadership and management

The grades that Ofsted award are:
• 1 (outstanding)
• 2 (good)
• 3 (requires improvement)
• 4 (inadequate)
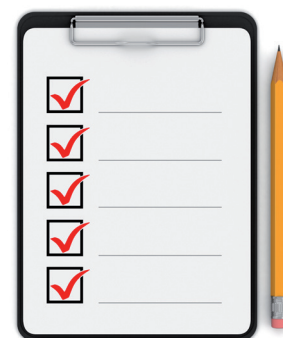
Finally, a judgement of the overall effectiveness of the school will be given.

It is helpful to refer to Ofsted's YouTube channel in order to keep up to date with inspection developments:
https://www.youtube.com/user/Ofstednews

In addition to this, you might like to explore Ofsted's slideshare website:
https://www.slideshare.net/Ofstednews

The Inspection Framework is very clear that Ofsted will inspect the way in which learners with SEND are identified, assessed and have their needs met. Inspectors will be looking for evidence of an inclusive culture in your setting. Where pupils with SEND are mentioned in the School Inspection handbook, this not only refers to those in specialist provision but all pupils with SEND in mainstream classrooms.

The Quality of Education

There is a much greater emphasis on the curriculum, in the Inspection Framework, than there has been before. You might like to consider: what knowledge and understanding do we expect our learners to gain at each stage of their time in school and in each subject?

Looking more closely at the individual categories, *The Quality of Education* will be evaluated under the following headings: **Intent**, **Implementation**, **Impact**.

Intent
'Inspectors will take a rounded view of the quality of education that a school provides to all its pupils, including the most disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Inspectors will consider the school's curriculum, which is the substance of what is taught with a specific plan of what pupils need to know in total and in each subject. Inspectors will consider the extent to which the school's curriculum sets out the knowledge and skills that pupils will gain at each stage' (Ofsted, 2019:41) (Ofsted call this '**intent**'). The Inspection Handbook is clear that learners with SEND should not be offered a reduced curriculum.

As the SENCO, you need to ask:
• How is the curriculum successfully adapted, designed or developed to be ambitious and meet the needs of pupils with SEND?
• How does the curriculum develop the knowledge, skills and abilities of pupils with SEND?
• How does this support pupils to apply what they know and can do with increasing fluency and independence?

Implementation
'In evaluating the implementation of the curriculum, inspectors will primarily evaluate how the curriculum is taught at subject and classroom level' (Ofsted, 2019:44). Ofsted will discuss the curriculum with subject leaders and class teachers to gain an understanding of the subjects and topics that are taught, as well as what the 'end points' are towards which learners are working. Inspectors will want to know the teachers' views of how well learners are progressing through the curriculum.

Impact
'When inspectors evaluate the impact of the education provided by the school, their focus will primarily be on what pupils have learned' (Ofsted, 2019:46). The following table based on paragraph 193 of the School Inspection Handbook outlines the evidence of impact that Ofsted will consider:

> **A well-constructed, well-taught curriculum. Inspectors will be looking for good results that reflect what pupils have learned.**
>
> **Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND acquire the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.**
>
> **National assessments and examinations are used as indicators of pupils' outcomes, but Inspectors will balance these outcomes with their first-hand assessment of pupils' work.**
>
> **The progress towards an 'end point'. How well are pupils prepared for their next stage of education, training or employment at each stage of their learning?**
>
> **Pupils in sixth form are ready for the next stage and are going on to appropriate, high-quality destinations.**

Inspectors will not use schools' internal assessment data as evidence
Inspectors will use national published data as a starting point. Schools can continue to use and analyse their own internal data but inspectors will focus what pupils know and remember.

There is a helpful briefing here
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/814685/Inspecting_the_curriculum.pdf
that outlines the inspection methodology for examining the quality of education.

Behaviour and Attitudes

'The behaviour and attitudes judgement considers how leaders and staff create a safe, calm, orderly and positive environment in the school and the impact this has on the behaviour and attitudes of pupils' (Ofsted, 2019:52). As a SENCO, it is worth examining what part you contribute towards this judgement by reading through paragraph 202

of the Section 5 handbook. It is important to read through paragraphs 204 *Pupils who have particular needs* and 205 *Pupils who are not in the school during the inspection*.

In terms of pupils with SEND, the guidance states, 'Inspectors will evaluate the experience of particular individuals and groups, such as pupils for whom referrals have been made to the local authority (and check, for a small sample of these pupils, how the referral was made and the thoroughness of the follow-up), pupils with SEND, children looked after, those with medical needs and those with mental health needs. In order to do this, inspectors will look at the experience of a small sample of these pupils and consider the way the school is working with the multi-agency group to ensure that the child receives the support they need. For pupils with SEND, this will include ensuring that appropriate reasonable adjustments are made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice' (Ofsted, 2019:54).

As a SENCO you need to ask:
- What referrals have we made to the Local Authority?
- How are we working in a multi-agency way to ensure that pupils receive the support they need?
- How do we ensure that we make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice?

Personal Development

'The personal development judgement evaluates the school's intent to provide for the personal development of all pupils, and the quality with which the school implements this work' (Ofsted, 2019:58). Paragraphs 216-228 provide detailed guidance on this. As a SENCO, the following aspects are highly relevant for you:
- promoting equality of opportunity so that all pupils can thrive together, understanding that difference is a positive, not a negative, and that individual characteristics make people unique
- promoting an inclusive environment that meets the needs of all pupils, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (Ofsted, 2019:58)
- developing pupils' confidence, resilience and knowledge so that they can keep themselves mentally healthy (Ofsted, 2019:59)

Inspectors will also examine learners' understanding of how equality and diversity are promoted. How do you contribute to a whole setting understanding of equality and diversity?

Leadership and Management

'The leadership and management judgement is about how leaders, managers and those responsible for governance ensure that the education that the school provides has a positive impact on all its pupils. It focuses on the areas where inspection and research indicate that leaders and

managers can have the strongest effect on the quality of the education provided by the school' (Ofsted, 2019:64). As a SENCO, you are leading on many areas of school life as outlined in the National Award for SEN Co-ordination Learning Outcomes. How are you able to demonstrate the impact of your leadership?

As a SENCO, consider how you have had an impact on the quality of education.

> **The Education Inspection Framework provides a helpful list of the types of evidence that Inspectors will gather and evaluate when considering the provision made for children and young people with SEND:**
> - **Whether leaders are ambitious for all pupils with SEND.**
> - **How well leaders identify, assess and meet the needs of pupils with SEND.**
> - **How well leaders develop and adapt the curriculum so that it is coherently sequenced to all pupils' needs, starting points and aspirations for the future.**
> - **How successfully leaders involve parents, carers and, as necessary, other professionals/specialist services in deciding how best to support pupils with SEND.**
> - **How well leaders include pupils with SEND in all aspects of school life.**
> - **How well the school assesses learning and development of pupils with SEND, and whether pupils' outcomes are improving as a result of the different or additional provision being made for them, including outcomes in:**
>   – **communication and interaction**
>   – **cognition and learning**
>   – **physical health and development**
>   – **social, emotional and mental health.**
> - **How well pupils with SEND are prepared for their next steps in education, employment and training, and their adult lives, including: further/higher education and employment, independent living, participating in society and being as healthy as possible in adult life.**

Section 5 Inspection – before inspection: what are the implications for the SENCO?

Prior to coming into school, inspectors look at the **Special Educational Needs Information Report** on the school's website.

Schedule 1 of the SEND Regulations 2014 sets out exactly what is required in this report.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the leadership team to ensure that this is up-to-date and publicly available on the school's website: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online

The SEN Information Report: questions to consider:
- Are you familiar with your school's SEN Information Report?
- Do you feel you would be able to explain this to the team?
- Are you confident that it has been co-produced with parents/carers and ideally young people?
- Have you checked that you have covered all the requirements of the legislation? http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/1530/part/3/crossheading/sen-information-report/made
- Is there anyone else in the school on the Senior Leadership Team and elsewhere that might be able to support you with your audit of provision?

Inspectors will also have familiarised themselves with the setting's **last inspection report**.

The previous inspection: questions to consider:
- Have your read the previous inspection report?
- Are there any action points where SEND have been mentioned and have these been addressed?
- Do you have evidence to demonstrate that progress has been made since the last inspection? Inspectors will explore the **school website** and undertake an **online search**. They are also likely to speak to you as the designated SENCO for the school.

Your school's online presence: questions to consider:
- If you explore your school's website looking at information around SEND, do you find the most recent documents/information? (For example, is the school's access plan up-to-date?)

- What information do you find when you undertake an online search of your school's name?
- Try searching using the name of your school and SEND. What do you notice? You may be asked questions about this.

Parent/carer partnership: questions to consider:
- Are you familiar with Ofsted Parent View:
  https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofsted-parent-view-toolkit-for-schools?
- How do you work in partnership with parents/carers?
- How do you seek to engage parents thoughtfully and positively in a way that supports pupils' education?

Make sure that you are familiar with Keeping Children Safe in Education and the sections that are particularly relevant to children and young people with SEND.

Evaluating provision in your school: Self-evaluation
Why should SENCOs self-evaluate?

Part of the purpose of self-evaluation is to ensure that children and young people are making progress and that an assessment about the school's performance in terms of meeting the needs of learners with SEND is made.

The other reason for self-evaluating is to set targets for school development. This is summed up in this diagram:
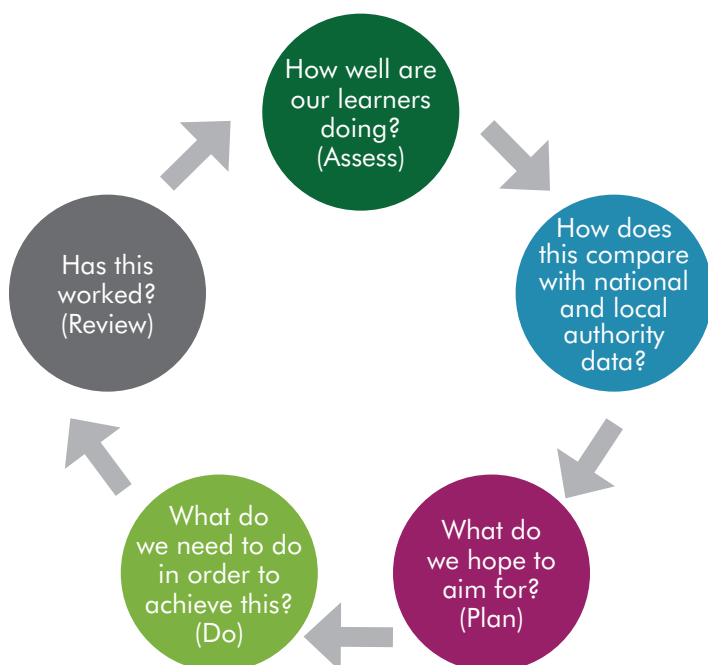
How well are our learners doing? (Assess)

Has this worked? (Review)

What **evidence** demonstrates the progress that you are making?
1. Data
2. Observations of learning and teaching
3. Work scrutiny
4. Pupil and parent views
5. Case studies

1. Data
How familiar are you with your setting's data for SEND?
- What percentage of the learners have SEND?
- How do you identify pupils with SEND?
- How does this compare to the national data and to other schools (above average/below average)?
- Is this percentage increasing or decreasing? Why?
- Have you analysed this according to areas of need?
- What is the attendance of children and young people with SEND?

Have you analysed the progress data? What does the progress of learners with SEND look like in comparison to those learners without SEND? Is there any difference between the different areas of need? How does this data compare with national statistics? The miniguide *Tracking progress and managing provision: Inclusive practice* is a helpful booklet to support you with understanding your school's data:
http://www.nasen.org.uk/miniguides/

You must be familiar with your school's Analyse School Performance (ASP) data:
http://www.raiseonline.org/
You will need to ask for a password to access this.

Once you have gathered all your data, you will need to consider how you will present this and what you will do with the data. For example, will you use it to inform your action plan?

2. Observations of teaching and learning
What evidence have you gathered that teaching has had an impact on children and young people's learning?
- Learning walks
- Lesson observations (whole class, small group, one-to-
- one)
- Book scrutiny etc

Here is a helpful document that outlines what to look for on a learning walk:
http://www.aettraininghubs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/8_National-Strategies_Learning-walks.pdf

This research presents some interesting models for observation:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-research-on-lesson-observation-models

How inclusive are the classrooms in your setting? How do you know? Have you used an inclusive classroom checklist?

Can you demonstrate the effective deployment of support staff?

http://maximisingtas.co.uk/resources/the-ta-deployment-review-guide.php

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/making-best-use-of-teaching-assistants/guidance-report/

What do observations of unstructured times of the day tell you about the children/young people with SEND?

Have you observed children/young people in extra-curricular activities?

3. Looking at the children and young people's work
What evidence can you see of progress in the learners' knowledge, skills and understanding in their work?

Is there evidence that work from interventions is being generalised into classroom work?

4. Pupil and parent views
What evidence do you have of the views of parents/carers and pupils' voices? (Interviews, questionnaires, feedback in books etc)

How are parents and carers involved in their children's learning?

The Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers miniguide is very helpful for considering ways to work in partnership with parents and carers:
http://www.nasen.org.uk/miniguides/

This DfE guide is also helpful when considering ways in which explore 'pupil voice':
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/listening-to-and-involving-children-and-young-people

5. Case studies
Case studies are a good way of demonstrating the range of provision that your school has (for example, emotional wellbeing support) and the impact that this has on the whole child or young person.

There is a useful article here that may help you:
http://sendco.co.uk/news-feed-for-all-categories/23-case-studies.html

You might like to consider a case study that demonstrates how you might set about bringing about improvement in one priority area and give an example/examples of how a small-scale practitioner action research project works, from identifying the issue, to taking baselines of the situation as is, to designing, implementing and evaluating the intervention/development project.

How have you and your governor for SEND worked together?

The role of the governor for SEND is to ensure that special educational needs and disability as well as inclusion are championed in the policies, practices and culture of the setting.

The SEND governor is there to act as a critical friend for the SENCO and to liaise about matters around the strategic overview of the provision for children and young people with SEND.

There also needs to be monitoring of the data, the impact of provision on learner progress and the effectiveness of the communication with families.

Your governor for SEND needs to be able to demonstrate that you work together and that they are aware of the development plan for SEND. In addition, it is important that they ensure that their own development is kept up-to-date by attending training and taking an active interest in developments in policy, legislation and practice.

The Governing Body has specific duties in relation to SEND as outlined in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/1530/pdfs/uksi_20141530_en.pdf

There is a helpful audit tool that can be downloaded here:
https://sendgov.co.uk/
which allows the Governing Body to audit how well the setting is able to secure high quality outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

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Section 15: The role of the SENCO in organising access arrangements

Access arrangements

Depending on your setting, you may be asked to facilitate reasonable adjustments for your learners who are undertaking standardised tests or examinations. If the exam is awarded by an exam board, the board must take steps to ensure that the person taking the examination is not substantially disadvantaged by their disability. This is in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

The SENCO may be asked to apply for access arrangements for examinations such as GCSEs or end of Key Stage SATs. In some secondary schools, a specific member of staff, other than the SENCO, may take a lead for these arrangements. Some SENCOs undertake additional 'accredited training' to be able to carry out assessment related to access arrangement applications.

Access arrangements might be a request for additional time, a scribe, a reader or modified papers. If you are requesting access arrangements, it is important to remember that you are asking for a provision that is something that the learner already uses to access their work, for example, are they used to having a reader for their work. This is important as it needs to be a normal way of working to ensure that the person sitting the exam is not made to feel different from their peers.

The requirements for these requests change from year to year so you will need to be familiar with the guidance that is provided.

If you are working in a **primary** setting, the Standards and Testing Agency is responsible for producing guidance each year on the types of access arrangements that you can make and how you should apply for these.

Types of support include:
- additional time to complete the tests
- early opening of test packs, to modify test papers
- compensatory marks for spelling
- using scribes, readers, word processors or other technical or electronic aids
- making transcripts
- written or oral translations and using apparatus in the mathematics test
- the use of prompts and rest breaks
- arrangements for pupils who are ill or are injured at the time of the tests
- administering the tests at an alternative location (Gov.UK, 2018:online)

The guidance states:
'Access arrangements might be used to support pupils who have:
- difficulty reading
- difficulty writing
- difficulty concentrating
- processing difficulties
- to use sign language
- a hearing impairment
- a visual impairment' (STA, 2017:3)

There are guidance documents produced for both Key Stages. The current documents are available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-1-tests-access-arrangements

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-2-tests-access-arrangements

If you are working in a **secondary** setting, you will find that the regulations for access arrangements are governed by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). The most recent guidance can be found here:
https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration

You should familiarise yourself with the document and make a note of the key dates by which information is required. Allow plenty of time to request modified papers and the earlier that you submit your requests the better. JCQ undertake inspections of exam centres to ensure that arrangements are being implemented appropriately.

Further information can be found here:

Key Stage 1 access arrangements:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-1-tests-access-arrangements

Key Stage 2 access arrangements:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-2-tests-access-arrangements

Joint Council for Qualifications:
http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration

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