

Script for Video: What is a special educational need or SEN?

Title slide

This video will explain what a special educational need is, or SEN. It is part of a series of videos around SEN, inclusion and equality on our Suffolk SENDIASS YouTube channel.

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This recording will refer to the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice of 2015](#). This is statutory guidance which means it comes directly from law. You can download it for free if you would like to. Chapter 6 is all about SEN support in schools.

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The law expects high quality or 'Quality First' teaching which is personalised and flexible for the whole class.

This involves some adjustments to the way teachers teach and communicate and the resources they use for all pupils. This is called 'differentiation'.

Some pupils with additional needs may have all or some of their needs met through whole class and whole school adjustments. Some may need further support.

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A child or young person will have a special educational need or SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which means they need educational support 'that is additional to, or different from, the support made generally for other children or young people of the same age.'

(SEND Code Intro para xiii and para xv)

This is called special educational provision.

If a child is under two years of age, then any educational support is special educational provision.



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So, just to be clear...

A child does not need a diagnosis or need to be disabled to have a special educational need. It all depends on an individual child's difficulties and whether they need support which is additional to, or different from, the support made for their peers.

If a child is making slow progress or has low attainment that doesn't necessarily mean that they have a special educational need. What will be important is regularly reviewing progress to make sure that any gap between

them and their peers doesn't continue to widen.

Equally, if a child is making progress in line with their age group that doesn't automatically mean that there isn't a learning difficulty. An example might be a child on the autistic spectrum who is doing well academically but is struggling to make and maintain friends and is finding it hard to take part in group activities. This child may need additional support for their social communication difficulties.

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There are 4 areas of special educational need.

The first area of communication and interaction covers support for children who are struggling to say what they want to, or to understand what is being said to them or to understand social rules of communication.


The second area is cognition and learning and examples of support in this area might be a reading or spelling intervention programme or perhaps the use of a recording device for a pupil with specific learning difficulties.

Examples of support for the third area - social, emotional, and mental health difficulties – might be counselling for a young person with high anxiety.

And the fourth area is sensory and physical needs. Examples of support in here could be visual strips on school pillars to help a child with a visual impairment or perhaps exercises designed by a physiotherapist for a child with mobility difficulties.

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Schools must tell parents when they are making special educational provision or support for a child or young person. (SEND Code section 6.2)



They must also publish a SEN Information Report on their website which explains how they assess, support and review the needs of pupils with SEN, how they involve pupils and parents in the process and explains how they will make adaptations for these pupils.

This includes support for improving emotional and social development and measures to prevent bullying.

(SEND Code section 6.79)

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If you think your child has a special educational need, the first step will be to talk to the nursery, school, or college. Think about what your child wants and needs to be able to do, both now and as they get older. These are sometimes called 'outcomes'.

Deciding whether special educational provision is needed should start with exploring these desired outcomes and should include the views and wishes of both you and your child. (SEND Code section 6.40)

The SEND Code of Practice is very clear that 'schools should take seriously any concern raised by a parent.' (SEND Code section 6.45)

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We have a range of videos on our Suffolk SENDIASS YouTube channel including this one, which explores the process of SEN support in schools and how you and your child are involved. The video includes some examples of whole class and whole school adjustments to help build your overall understanding. And each term we also offer live information sessions for parents and carers explaining the process of SEN support in schools.

[Suffolk SENDIASS videos](#)

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Many children with special educational needs may also be disabled according to the Equality Act of 2010.

If you're not sure if your child meets the threshold for disability under the law, do visit our [Suffolk SENDIASS website](#) and [YouTube channel](#) to find more information and videos about disability and equality...



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...and to find further information and videos around SEN and inclusion.

[Suffolk SENDIASS videos](#)

[Equality and inclusion](#)

[Education](#) (including information on SEN, equality, and inclusion)

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This video was made by Suffolk SENDIASS, but every county has an impartial and confidential SEND Information, Advice and Support Service.