

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

Plotting overlapping needs for pupils with SEND

The terms used within SEND are not universally agreed, either within legislation or by the individuals with those needs. However, the following terms and categorisations come largely from the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and are therefore a useful guide. This document is not an attempt to list all types of need, merely to provide a starting point to understanding the breadth of needs that fall within SEND.

Cognition and learning

This area includes moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and specific learning difficulties (SpLD).

PMLD is when a person has a severe learning disability and other disabilities that significantly affect their ability to communicate and be independent. Someone with PMLD may have difficulties seeing, hearing, speaking and moving. They may have complex health and social care needs due to these or other conditions.

SpLDs include: dyslexia (difficulties with reading and spelling), dyscalculia (difficulties with number and calculation), and dyspraxia* (or 'developmental coordination disorder' - difficulties with motor planning). People with one or more SpLDs may have a 'spiky profile' of attainment, with areas of strength and areas of need.

Sensory and/or physical needs

This area includes sensory impairments, such as visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) and multi-sensory impairment, as well as physical conditions such as cerebral palsy. These children will usually access support from a specific local team, which may be a combination of education and health services.

These children do not necessarily have difficulties with their cognitive functioning, which may be average or above average.

Cognition
and learning

Communication
and interaction

Sensory and/or
physical needs

Social,
emotional and
mental health

Communication and interaction

This area includes speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), such as Developmental Language Disorder (DLD). A learner with SLCN may have difficulties with speech production, with understanding language, with using language to express themselves or with a combination of all three. It also includes difficulties with the social use of language.

Children with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Condition, including Asperger's Syndrome**, will have needs in this area.

Children who find communication and interaction challenging may or may not also have difficulties with cognitive functioning.

Social, emotional and mental health

Challenging behaviours are displayed for many reasons, which may be indicative of underlying mental health difficulties (such as anxiety or depression) or emotional issues (such as attachment needs). Some children have conditions such as ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) or ADD*** (Attention Deficit Disorder), which may affect their behaviours in school.

It is crucial to look for the underlying causes of any behaviour and/or emotional state, and aim to support these, rather than just dealing with the presenting behaviour.

For some children with SEMH needs, the nature of these difficulties will affect their successful access to the curriculum, either temporarily or in the long term.

*With many types of SEND, a learner's difficulties will not be restricted to one area. A dyspraxic learner's difficulties in school may overlap into 'Sensory and/or Physical needs', for example. SEND Code of Practice (2015) classification is being used in this case.

** Though no longer recognised as a term in the International Classification of Diseases manual (ICD-11), some children will identify as having Asperger's, hence its inclusion here.

*** ADD is no longer recognised as a term within the ICD-11 manual, though it is mentioned in the SEND Code of Practice (2015).