



## **Recruiting Teachers into UK Schools**

### **justteachers Guide to Special Education Needs**

#### **Who can teach Special Educational Needs?**

It takes a special person to work with pupils who have special educational needs. SEN teachers need to be flexible, caring, patient and able to work in a team-based environment providing work for a wide range of abilities. Special needs teaching is demanding and challenging, yet very rewarding.

A formal SEN teaching qualification is not a requirement in the UK, and schools look for teachers with the right attitude & personality. An understanding of the requirements of SEN gained in any setting is beneficial and schools are willing to give training and support to teachers with a positive approach. A subject specialism is not always required. In fact, some SLD (Severe Learning Difficulties) schools welcome teachers whose work programmes will reflect the levels of the pupils. Please speak with your dedicated [justteachers](#) education consultant regarding SEN work available with [justteachers](#) in the UK.

#### **Definitions of SEN**

##### **Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)**

Specific Learning Difficulty covers a range of related conditions which occur across a continuum of severity. Pupils may have difficulties in reading, writing, spelling or manipulating numbers which are not typical of their general level of performance.

Pupils may have difficulties with short-term memory, with organisational skills, with hand-eye co-ordination and with orientation and directional awareness.

Dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia fall under this umbrella.

##### **Dyslexia**

Dyslexia is the most common. Dyslexia causes difficulties in learning to read, write and spell. Short-term memory, concentration, personal organisation and sequencing may also be affected. Pupils may have difficulties in remembering sequences of words or actions, mispronounce common words, reverse letters and sounds in words. They may also have poor reading comprehension, handwriting and punctuation and become frustrated with reading.

##### **Dyscalculia**

Pupils with dyscalculia have difficulty with numbers and remembering mathematical facts as well as performing mathematical operations. Pupils may have difficulties with abstract concepts of time and direction, recalling schedules, and sequences of events as well as difficulties with mathematical concepts, rules, formulas, and basic addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of facts.



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### **Dyspraxia**

Dyspraxic pupils are affected by an impairment or immaturity of the organisation of movement, often giving the appearance of clumsiness. Gross and fine motor skills are hard to learn and difficult to retain and generalise. Pupils may have poor balance and coordination and may be hesitant in many actions (running, skipping, hopping, holding a pencil, doing jigsaws, etc). Their articulation may be immature and their language late to develop. They may also have poor awareness of body position in space and poor social skills.

### **Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD)**

Moderate Learning Difficulty is used to describe developmental delay across a number of areas. Pupils with moderate learning difficulty will have attainments below expected levels in most subjects across the curriculum. MLD is often attributed to a variety and combination of causes, including mild and multiple physical and sensory disabilities, impoverished or adverse social or educational background, specific learning difficulties and limited general ability. Pupils have difficulty in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills and in many cases will have speech and language difficulties associated with intellectual delay. A few many also have low self-esteem, low levels of concentration, under-developed social skills and have behavioural, emotional and social difficulty and/or physical disability that affect their learning abilities.

### **Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD)**

Severe Learning Difficulty is used to describe pupils who have significant global delay. Pupils with SLD may also have mobility and co-ordination difficulties, sensory difficulties, communication difficulties and challenging behaviour. Pupils with SLD have difficulty with all areas of the curriculum and find it difficult to develop social skills. They often require support in learning self help and social skills. Their attainments may be within the P scale range for much of their school careers. Pupils with SLD fall into two main groups: those with a developmental delay related to cognitive impairment and those with a disability that has arisen as a result of injury. A particular feature is that they are often in combination, which compounds the challenges faced by teachers. Many pupils will have associated sensory, physical and behavioural difficulties. Teachers of these pupils will need to be aware of the way in which impairments interact to affect development and the implications for planning and delivering the whole curriculum.

### **Profound and multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)**

Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulty have more than one significant disability. In addition to severe learning difficulties, pupils often have more severe physical difficulties and a greater degree of intellectual impairment. Pupils require a high level of one to one support, both for their learning needs and also for their personal care. Their attainments are likely to remain in the P scale range throughout their school careers.



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### **Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulty (BESD)**

Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulty covers a continuum of severity and the full range of ability. It describes pupils whose difficulties present a barrier to learning and persist despite an effective school behaviour policy and curriculum. Pupils with EBD experience problems in adapting to a range of physical, social and personal situations. They may set up barriers between themselves and their learning environment through inappropriate, aggressive or withdrawn behaviour.

By the time they enter an EBD school, they are likely to resort to strategies for dealing with day-to-day experiences that are inappropriate, impede normal personal development and make it difficult for them to learn.

At the milder end of the continuum, pupils have difficulties with social interaction and find it difficult to work in a group or cope in unstructured time. They may have poor concentration, temper outbursts and be verbally and/or physically aggressive to peers.

Some pupils display similar signs of low esteem, under achievement and inappropriate social interaction, but do not have behavioural outbursts. They will be withdrawn, quiet and difficult to communicate with.

Other pupils provoke peers and are confrontational or openly defiant and sometimes physically aggressive towards adults. They are often off task and have a very short concentration span. Their self esteem is low and they find it hard or impossible to accept praise or to take responsibility for their behaviour.

Some pupils cannot function at all in group situations and exhibit persistent and frequent violent behaviour which requires physical restraint.

In general, teachers will encounter pupils with low self-esteem, most likely showing marked reactions to frustration and failure in learning, and having problems in adjusting to expectations and routines.

### **Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)**

Pupils with speech, language and communication needs have difficulty in understanding and/or making others understand information conveyed through language. Their acquisition of speech and/or oral language skills is noticeably behind their peers. Their speech may be poor or unintelligible.

Pupils with speech disorders have difficulties in producing speech sounds (articulation) or problems with the pitch or the voice quality. They may stutter or may have difficulty using some speech sounds.

Pupils with language disorders find it hard to understand and/or use words in context. They may use words wrongly with inappropriate grammatical patterns, have a reduced vocabulary or find it hard to express ideas. They may also hear or see a word but not be able to understand its meaning or have trouble getting others to understand what they are trying to communicate.



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### **Hearing Impairment (HI)**

A significant proportion of pupils have some degree of hearing impairment. For educational purposes, pupils are regarded as having a hearing impairment if they require either adaptation to their environment and/or support through hearing aids in order to access the curriculum. A small percentage of pupils with a hearing impairment also have an additional disability or learning difficulty.

Hearing loss can be measured on a decibel scale and four categories are generally used: slight, moderate, severe and profound. Some pupils with a severe or profound loss, communicate through sign. A pupil who has experience of hearing and using speech may be able to speak but a child with a similar loss from birth would find verbal communication more difficult.

### **Visual Impairment (VI)**

Visual impairment refers to a range of difficulties from minor impairment through to blindness. For educational purposes, a pupil is considered to be visually impaired if they require either adaptations to their environment and/or physical support through the provision of vision aids and additional learning support in order to access the curriculum. Pupils whose vision is corrected by spectacles should not be included in this group.

A blind pupil is usually defined as one who requires mainly non-sighted methods for learning; for example, Braille and the use of their hearing. Other pupils with visual impairment include those who are partially sighted or have a restricted 'field of vision'. They may use enlarged print or a mix of learning methods.

### **Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)**

Many pupils with multi-sensory impairment sometimes referred to as deaf blind, also have profound and multiple learning difficulties. They should only be included in this group if their sensory impairment is their greatest need.

The combination of deafness and blindness profoundly affects the pupil's perception of the environment and can result in high anxiety and multi-sensory deprivation. Pupils with multi-sensory impairment have to learn to communicate differently to those who are deaf or blind. Their other senses are used to supplement residual hearing and residual vision.

### **Physical Difficulty (PD)**

Some pupils with physical difficulties are mobile; some walk with aids and others may be wheelchair users. A few may be totally dependent on adults and unable to function independently. Pupils with physical disabilities may also have sensory impairments, neurological problems and learning difficulties.

There are a large number of conditions associated with physical difficulty which can impact on mobility. These include cerebral palsy, heart disease, spina bifida and hydrocephalus.



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Some pupils with physical or medical difficulties have no problem accessing the curriculum and learning effectively. In such cases having a medical diagnosis does not imply that the pupil has special educational needs. In other cases, the impact on a pupil's education ranges from mild to severe. Pupils may need support in terms of physical access to buildings and classrooms, to enable them to work independently.

### Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Autistic Spectrum Disorder is a relatively new term to denote the fact that there are a number of sub-groups within the spectrum of autism. All pupils with ASD share a triad of impairments in their ability to:

- understand and use non-verbal and verbal communication
- understand social behaviour - which affects their ability to interact with children and adults
- think and behave flexibly - which may be shown in restricted, obsessional or repetitive activities

Pupils of all levels of ability can have ASD and it can occur with other disorders.

Some pupils with ASD have a different perception of sounds, sights, smell, touch and taste, which affects their response to these sensations. They may have unusual sleep and behaviour patterns.

They may have a difficulty in understanding the communication of others and in developing effective communication themselves. Many are delayed in learning to speak and some never develop speech.

Pupils find difficulty in understanding the social behaviour of others and in behaving in socially appropriate ways. They are literal thinkers and fail to understand the social context.

Pupils with an ASD often do not play with toys in a conventional way but instead spin or flap objects or watch moving parts of machinery for long periods with intense concentration. They find it hard to generalise skills and have difficulty adapting to new situations and often prefer routine.

Pupils with Asperger's syndrome are included in this category. Asperger's pupils share the same triad of impairments but have higher intellectual abilities and better language development than the majority of pupils with autism.

### SEN Terminology Explained

**ACE** - Advisory Centre for Education

**ADD** - Attention Deficit Disorder

**ADHD** - Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder



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**ADDISS** - Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service

**Afasic** - Organisation supporting children and young people with speech, language and communication difficulties

**Amanuensis** - Supporter who helps pupils with SEN put their thoughts onto paper

**AOT** - Autism Outreach Team

**ASD** - Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Pupils who may find it difficult to understand and use non-verbal and verbal communication

**Asperger's syndrome** - Pupils on the autism spectrum but have higher intellectual abilities

**ATH** - Additional Teaching Hours. Peripatetic or support teacher

**BDA** - British Deaf Association

**BDA** - The British Dyslexic Association

**BESD** - Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulty. Pupils whose behaviour or social needs present a barrier to learning

**CF** - Cystic Fibrosis

**CLAPA** - Cleft Lip and Palate Association

**DCD** - Development Co-ordination Difficulty. Also termed Dyspraxia

**Disapplication** - Rules on how to display part of the National Curriculum for those with SEN

**Dyscalculia** - Pupils having difficulty in acquiring mathematical skills

**Dyslexia** - Pupils having a marked and persistent difficulty in learning to read, write and spell, despite progress in other areas

**Dyspraxia** - Pupils with impairment of gross and fine motor skills

**EAL** - English as an additional Language

**ECM** - Government Green paper

**EMASS** - Ethnic Minority Achievement Support Service

**EPS** - Educational Psychology Service

**EWO** - Educational Welfare Officer



## Recruiting Teachers into UK Schools

**GEP** - Group Educational Plans

**HI** - Hearing Impaired

**HLTA** - Higher Level Teaching Assistant

**IEP** - Individual Educational Plan

**Inclusion** - School provides flexible curriculum and increased capacity to meet needs of all pupils

**Integration** - Where a child fits into existing school provision and curriculum

**LEA** - Local Educational Authority

**MD** - Muscular Dystrophy

**MLD** - Moderate Learning Difficulties. Pupils whose attainments are significantly below expected levels in most areas of the curriculum

**MSI** - Multi-Sensory Impairment. Pupils with complex visual and hearing difficulties

**NASEN** - National Association for Special Educational Needs

**Note in Lieu** - Issued following a statutory assessment, when the LEA decides not to make a statement

**Notional Budget** - Combined sum of money, made up of 4% AWPU, Delegated Statement Budget and an additional amount, for SENCo's release time, at present comprising of £6.91 for every pupil in school

**P Scales** - Performance descriptors. A common basis for measuring the progress of pupils working up to level 1 in all subjects of the National Curriculum

**PD** - Physical Disability

**PLASC** - Pupil Level Annual Schools Census. Extensive information collected about all pupils. One section concerns information about pupils with different types of special educational needs

**PMLD** - Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties. Pupils with complex learning needs and other significant physical difficulties

**Portage** - Home-based pre-school education for children with development delay, disabilities or any other special educational needs

**RNIB** - Royal National Institute for the blind



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**RNID** - Royal National Institute for Deaf and hard of hearing people

**Inclusion** - School provides flexible curriculum and increased capacity to meet needs of all pupils

**Integration** - Where a child fits into existing school provision and curriculum

**SA** - School Action

**SA+** - School Action Plus

**SALT** - Speech and Language Therapist

**SEN Code of Practice** - Practical guidance to LEAs and the governing bodies of all maintained schools

**SEN** - Special Educational Needs

**SENA** - Special Educational Needs Assessment Service

**SENCo** - Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

**SENDIST** - SEN & Disability Tribunal

**SLCN** - Speech, Language and Communication Needs. Pupils may have difficulty in understanding and / or making others understand information conveyed through spoken language

**SpLD** - Specific Learning Difficulties. A descriptor covering Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia

**SLCN** - Speech, Language and Communication needs

**Statement of Special Educational Needs** - Legally enforceable document that describes the special educational needs of the child and how these needs will be met

**Statutory Assessment** - Multi-disciplinary assessment by the LEA of a child's educational need

**SSS** - Specialist Support Service

**STS** - Specialist Teaching Service

**TA / LSA** - Teaching Assistant / Learning Support Assistant. Interchangeable terms for support staff

**TES** - Traveller Educational Service

**Transition Plan** - A plan drawn up at the Annual Review of Year 9 pupils, who have learning difficulties or disabilities. Reviewed annually



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VI - Visually Impaired

Wave 3 - Specific targeted approaches for pupils with SEN

Further information can be found at:

British Dyslexia Association: [www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk)

Dyslexia Institute: [www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk](http://www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk)

Dyspraxia: [www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk](http://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk)

Dyscalculia: [www.dyscalculia.org.uk](http://www.dyscalculia.org.uk)

MENCAP: [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

Association for all speech impaired children - AFASIC: [www.afasic.org.uk](http://www.afasic.org.uk)

ICAN: [www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk)

RNID: [www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)

British Deaf Association: [www.bda.org.uk](http://www.bda.org.uk)

Action for the Blind: [www.afbp.org](http://www.afbp.org)

RNIB: [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

World Health Organisation: [www.who.int/en](http://www.who.int/en)

NCDS: [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

Deafblind: [www.deafblind.co.uk](http://www.deafblind.co.uk)

SENSE: [www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)

SCOPE: [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)

Down's Syndrome Association: [www.dsa-uk.com](http://www.dsa-uk.com)

National Autistic Society: [www.nas.org.uk](http://www.nas.org.uk)

Autism Connect: [www.autismconnect.org](http://www.autismconnect.org)

Contact a family: [www.candamily.org.uk](http://www.candamily.org.uk)

Disability Code of Practice for Schools: [www.drc.org.uk](http://www.drc.org.uk)



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The Disability Discrimination Act 1995

SEN Code of Practice - (DfES/ 0581/2001): [www.dfes.gov.uk/sen](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/sen)

SEN Specialist Standards - (91/12-99): [www.teach-tta.gov.uk](http://www.teach-tta.gov.uk)

Promoting Children's Mental Health within Early Years and Schools Settings -Guidance - (DfES/0112/2001): [www.dfes.gov.uk/sen](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/sen)

Autism Spectrum Disorder - Good Practice Guidance - (DfES/597/2002): [www.dfes.gov.uk/sen](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/sen)

Supporting the Target Setting Process: Guidance for effective target setting for pupils with special educational needs - (DfEE/0065/2001):  
[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/otherresources/publications/targetsetting](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/otherresources/publications/targetsetting)

Please email me with any questions regarding working as a SEN teacher in the UK:  
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