

**SPECIFICATION FOR MANDATORY QUALIFICATIONS FOR SPECIALIST
TEACHERS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH VISUAL
IMPAIRMENTS**

For courses starting from September 2009

Introduction

This specification applies to mandatory qualification (MQ) courses starting from September 2009.

So that children and young people with sensory impairments receive the best quality education and care, teachers of classes of children and young people with hearing impairments (HI) ¹, visual impairments (VI) ² and multi-sensory impairments (MSI) ³ are required⁴ to hold an additional specialist qualification in addition to qualified teacher status. This qualification is known as the mandatory qualification for teachers of pupils with sensory impairments and is designed to prepare teachers⁵ to work effectively with children and young people who have HI, VI or MSI.

There are three versions of the qualification: one for teachers of learners with HI, one for those teaching learners with VI, and one for those teaching learners with MSI. Teachers employed to teach classes of children and young people with a sensory impairment who do not already hold an appropriate MQ are required to gain the qualification within their first three years in post.

‘A qualified teacher may be employed to teach a class of pupils who are hearing impaired, visually impaired, or both hearing and visually impaired if the headteacher is satisfied that the person in question is in the process of obtaining the relevant MQ and provided that the aggregate period for which the teacher teaches a class of pupils does not exceed three years.’ [Statutory instrument 2003 No.1662. The Education (School Teachers’ Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003, 9.]

Although the requirement to hold an MQ applies only to teachers in specific roles, the appeal of the MQs is much wider. Qualified teachers in support and advisory roles and those working with children and young people with VI in early years and post-16 settings are also strongly advised, in the best interest of the children and young people they work with, to complete MQ training.

‘The regulations apply to teachers employed in schools and not specialist peripatetic HI/VI/MSI teachers employed in LEA SEN support

¹ People with hearing impairments may have some residual hearing. Hearing impairment is sometimes referred to as ‘deafness’ or ‘hearing loss’.

² Visual impairment is sometimes referred to as ‘blindness’, ‘partial sightedness’ or ‘sight loss’.

³ People with multi-sensory impairment may have some residual sight and/or hearing. Multi-sensory impairment is sometimes referred to as ‘dual-sensory loss’ or ‘deafblindness’.

⁴ Statutory Instrument 2003 No.1662, the Education (School Teachers’ Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003

⁵ The regulations apply to teachers employed in schools and not specialist peripatetic teachers working with pupils with sensory impairments employed in local authority special educational needs support services. However, the DCSF has stated that it is their expectation that such teachers would have the relevant MQ (see text below).

services. It would, however, be our expectation that such teachers would have the relevant MQ'.⁶

All MQ training programmes must meet the minimum specification set out on pages 10-14. However, it is expected that some providers will wish to develop additional criteria to tailor MQ courses more closely to the needs of participants and other stakeholders.

To be awarded an MQ, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) requires that participants are assessed against – and demonstrate that they meet – the course outcomes. The level at which the qualification is validated is entirely a matter for providers. It should not compromise the purposes or quality of the MQ and should be consistent with the expertise required of the role of a qualified teacher of children and young people with visual impairments.

Providing training leading to the award of an MQ

To deliver a course leading to the award of an MQ, training providers must gain the approval of the Secretary of State. Although the type of provider is not stipulated, MQ courses have traditionally been delivered by higher education institutions, sometimes in partnership with others, including local authorities, schools and voluntary bodies.

To become an approved provider of MQ courses, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), on behalf of the DCSF, periodically invites training providers to seek approval and, if they are interested, submit an application demonstrating how their provision will meet the requirements of the specification and how their course will assist teachers in meeting the course outcomes, including the minimum MQ outcomes. Each application is assessed by a panel, including representatives from the TDA, DCSF and other specialists in the field of special educational needs (SEN) and disability.

It is envisaged that successful providers will receive approval from the Secretary of State to deliver courses leading to the award of MQ for an initial period of five years. Approved MQ provision may be inspected by Ofsted.

The MQ specification

This specification was developed following consultation with existing MQ providers and other key stakeholders, including relevant voluntary organisations, local authorities and schools, during 2007 and 2008. Views were gathered through a series of meetings in July 2007 and an online consultation, which ran from July to October 2007, and finalised at a meeting in January 2008. The new specification is set out below (pages 10-14).

The specification sets out six overarching criteria. Potential MQ course providers must demonstrate in their application for approval how the provision

⁶ DfES letter written in April 2003 explaining the purpose of the Education (School Teachers' Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003. This relates specifically to regulations 6-9

they propose meets each of the criteria. The specific features that applications for approval should cover are listed below in the specification under each criterion. Those reviewing applications will use these statements to determine which providers should be approved to deliver MQ training. To assist those preparing applications for approval against the criteria and to address some of the issues that arose during consultation, a brief introduction to each criterion is set out below.

Criterion 1

MQs should have as their main objective and outcome the raised achievement of children and young people with VI through improving participants' professional knowledge, understanding and skills

Provision should reflect the principles of Every Child Matters⁷ by giving participants the knowledge, understanding and skills to maximise the opportunities open to children and young people with sensory impairments so as to improve their life chances and enable them to fulfil their potential. In this criterion, and throughout the specification, references to the 'achievement' of children and young people should be taken to be broadly defined to include not just academic attainment, but achievement in relation to all five Every Child Matters outcomes, ie. being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, and achieving economic well-being. The course should also prepare participants to listen to the views of children and young people and to work together with others, including other professionals, parents, carers and families, to protect children and young people and help them to achieve.

MQ courses must be strongly rooted in practice and should make strong links with mainstream and special schools, and local authority sensory support services to help keep provision up to date and relevant to practice. MQ courses should help prepare participants to work effectively in their current roles (in any phase or context, including in early years and post-16 settings, within mainstream and specialist provision and in support and advisory roles) but should also give them opportunities to gain experience of other relevant work contexts, eg. through visits, work shadowing and placements.

Criterion 2

MQs should respond to participants' identified training and development needs by offering appropriately differentiated provision that is of high quality, matched to participants' training and development needs, promotes progression towards the course outcomes, and makes best use of available resources

The purpose of this criterion is to make the best possible use of the resources available to deliver MQ courses so that they have the maximum impact on

⁷ Every Child Matters: Change for Children, HMSO, (2003)

participants' practice and the outcomes achieved by the children and young people they teach. Those teaching children and young people with sensory impairments will come from different backgrounds, work in a range of different contexts, and have varying knowledge, skills and experience. As a result, participants will have different strengths and training needs in relation to the course outcomes. To ensure that all participants gain maximum benefit from MQ training and that providers make the best use of the resources available to them, provision should be matched as closely as possible to individual needs.

It is important that everyone who joins a course leading to the award of an MQ is able to benefit fully from it. Providers should, therefore, assure themselves that those accepted to join MQ courses have sufficient knowledge, understanding and skills on joining the course to be likely to meet all the course outcomes by the end of the course. Where prospective participants fall below an acceptable entry level in one or more areas, providers should offer them guidance about what they need to do to achieve the required entry level.

Provision should incorporate an initial needs assessment in relation to the course outcomes to ensure well-targeted and cost-effective professional development for participants. An initial needs assessment against the course outcomes can help providers to tailor the course to participants' needs and suggest a 'personalised' set of outcomes for each participant. Courses should take full account of participants' prior knowledge and achievement. If a provider is satisfied, at the beginning of an MQ course, that all the participants in the group already meet a particular group of outcomes, then the course need not cover these in great detail, and the time released can be spent looking at other aspects in more detail.

Providers may need to use the course outcomes to devise a needs assessment tool to help avoid participants/tutors inadvertently making inaccurate assessments through misinterpreting the scope or level of outcomes, eg. participants thinking that they already meet a knowledge-based outcome when actually the knowledge that they hold in relation to that outcome is out of date. Providers should not be too concerned about the absolute accuracy of needs assessment processes, however, as they should only serve as a guide to help differentiate provision to meet the needs of participants. Ultimately, all participants must demonstrate that they meet all the course outcomes, and assessors should look for evidence against all the course outcomes throughout the course as an additional check on the accuracy of the needs assessment.

In exceptional circumstances, providers may encounter prospective participants – for example experienced staff from the independent sector, experienced teachers from SEN services, or those trained overseas – who seem already to meet the course outcomes but do not yet have the qualification. In such cases, providers could have arrangements in place whereby prospective participants can present themselves for assessment without any training. As with participants on a 'traditional' MQ route, candidates for 'assessment-only' will need to be assessed against – and

demonstrate that they meet – all the course outcomes before being awarded the qualification. It is a matter for providers themselves to determine how this may best be achieved and what it should cost. For example, it may well be that a provider will consider that an assessed ‘placement module’ and/or a written assignment is the best way for a prospective participant to demonstrate that he/she already meets the course outcomes. Providers should be aware that, at present, candidates achieving the course outcomes cannot be awarded ‘qualified teacher of visually impaired pupils’ status without also gaining a specific higher education award (MQ) approved by the Secretary of State.

MQ courses cannot cover everything that teachers of children and young people with VI will need to know throughout their careers. As with all professional development, completing an MQ is a stepping-stone. MQ providers have a responsibility to ensure that, at the end of the MQ course, participants are helped to identify areas for further development. This does not mean that the MQ provider has to set specific objectives – objective setting is done in discussion with line managers in the workplace. But providers should emphasise the importance of participants setting further objectives, eg. by building opportunities to set objectives into the end of courses, providing planning tools, discussing further possibilities and opportunities, and giving participants ideas they can consider and discuss with their managers.

Criterion 3

MQs should be delivered flexibly, without compromising appropriate progression and quality of outcome, to maximise access for participants

This criterion covers aspects of accessibility for all candidates to make it possible for all those needing or wishing to take an MQ to be able to do so.

Providers wishing to offer MQ courses should show in their applications for approval how their courses promote equality of opportunity and good relations by meeting the requirements of relevant equality legislation, including the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA), and the Equality Act 2006. For example, they should show how:

- they are meeting the DDA ‘anticipatory duty’ by anticipating the needs of disabled candidates/participants and making provision for them
- they encourage and support candidates/participants to disclose disabilities so that reasonable adjustments can be made
- they will promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- the needs of disabled candidates will be reflected in promotional and pre-course materials for MQ candidates, and
- they will avoid discriminating against disabled participants in selection, during training (including on visits and placements) and in assessment.

Since the majority of MQ participants study part-time, provision should be as flexible as possible without compromising appropriate progression and quality of outcome. The TDA is aware that there are limits to the amount of flexibility that one provider can achieve, especially where numbers are very small. To ensure that courses are as accessible as possible, those reviewing applications for approval will be looking for a range of flexible provision nationally, rather than necessarily within one provider's courses. However, those applying for approval to offer MQ courses must demonstrate that they have done everything they can to make their provision as flexible as possible. Even very small changes can make a considerable difference. For example, providers could publish information about course dates well in advance to enable participants to attend training without missing important events at their workplace. They could also put some course elements online so that participants who miss sessions unavoidably are able to catch up, or advertise any crèche provision that might be available.

Criterion 4

MQs should be informed by the needs of stakeholders and involve them in development, delivery, evaluation and improvement of the provision

Stakeholders might include teachers, schools/other settings, employers, local authorities, parents/carers, children and young people, and others such as the relevant SEN associations and groups of disabled people, as well as current and former participants on MQ courses.

In their applications for approval, those wishing to provide MQ training must make clear how they have collected and taken account of evidence about the needs of stakeholders. This does not mean that stakeholders can determine the content of MQ courses. That is largely dictated by the MQ outcomes and the identified needs of participants. However, providers should be clear about what stakeholders feel is important and, wherever possible, should allow this to influence course content. For example, with regard to the MQ for teachers of children and young people with a VI, some teachers on the programme may be working in small local authorities where there are currently no children who are developing literacy through Braille; others may be currently working only with children who have multiple disabilities and who are at the pre-formal stage of communication. In these cases, their line managers may request that the teachers be exempted from the Braille requirement. However, in order for VI specialists to be able to work across the ability range, attaining a standard in Braille is a required outcome of the MQ and must be taught. To take account of the views of these stakeholders providers could, for example, give the participants the opportunity to research and discuss access to a range of alternative communication and literacy systems available to support the learning needs of the diverse population of children and young people who have a VI, and help participants to make sound professional judgements about the methods they use, taking alternative views into account.

Those applying for approval to become MQ course providers should also show how stakeholders will be directly or indirectly involved in their provision, eg. as guest speakers, as hosts for visiting participants, as 'distant' tutors or mentors for participants in the workplace, as moderators or assessors, or in giving evidence about the impact of MQ courses.

Criterion 5

MQs should be of a consistently high quality and subject to rigorous quality assurance procedures, and be supported by mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and improving the impact of provision on teachers' competence and the achievement of children and young people with VI

Provision must be supported by rigorous and relevant quality assurance (QA) mechanisms. It should be clear how both internal and external measures will be used to evaluate and improve the quality and impact of provision.

Those applying for approval to become MQ providers should show how all aspects of provision will be subject to QA measures, including:

- recruitment and selection
- needs assessment and setting objectives
- course content, including workplace-based elements
- assessment against the course outcomes, and
- evaluation.

They should show the sources of evidence and mechanisms for ensuring that information gleaned will affect future planning and development of the content and delivery of provision.

The main purpose of the MQ must be to raise participants' competence and the achievement of children and young people with VI. The TDA recognises that it may be difficult to gather evidence about the impact of MQ provision on the achievement of children and young people over the short time that the course runs. Providers should, however, show how they take every opportunity to gather such evidence. They could, for example, encourage participants carrying out assignments to take baseline measures before interventions, and to measure the impact on the achievement of children and young people with VI following those interventions and over time.

It is essential that candidates are suitable for work with children and young people. Candidates should be checked following the principles set out in chapter four of Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education. Checks should be made to ensure that candidates do not have a criminal background that might prevent them from working with children or young people or as a teacher, and ensure that they have not previously been

excluded from teaching or working with children or young people. Checks should be made with previous employers to ensure there were no concerns about a person's conduct and that there are no outstanding disciplinary issues that would give cause for concern. As part of their recruitment and selection procedures, providers should assure themselves that those accepted onto MQ courses have had the appropriate background checks to allow them to work with children and young people.⁸ The majority of MQ candidates are likely to be employed as teachers at the time of taking the course and, as such, are likely to have undergone the appropriate Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) enhanced disclosure check. However, if a candidate with qualified teacher status has not worked in a school or FE college in a post that involves regular contact with children or young people within the past three months, it would be necessary for a CRB enhanced disclosure to be obtained.

Criterion 6

MQs should have, as a minimum requirement for successful completion, the outcomes set out in annex A of the MQ specification, so that those holding the qualification(s) make maximum impact on practice

Applications from those seeking approval to run MQ courses should demonstrate how the provider will ensure that the MQ is awarded only to candidates who have shown that their knowledge, understanding and skills match the outcomes in annex A of the specification. These are minimum requirements. Providers may wish to include other outcomes.

⁸ As stipulated by The School Staffing (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2006, School Staffing (England) (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 2006, and Further Education (Providers of Education) (England) Regulations 2006.

SPECIFICATION FOR COURSES LEADING TO THE MANDATORY QUALIFICATION FOR TEACHERS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

The national specification is set out below. It has, at its heart, three purposes. These are that mandatory qualifications should:

- be of a consistently high quality
- have an impact on raising the achievement and improving the well-being of children and young people in relation to all five Every Child Matters outcomes, and
- be easily accessible to those wishing to take them.

Mandatory qualifications should:

- 1. Have as their main objective and outcome the raised achievement⁹ of children and young people with VI through improving participants' professional knowledge, understanding and skills.**

Successful applications for approval to run MQ courses will demonstrate that provision will:

- 1.1. have a clear focus in course aims, objectives, content and assessment on raising the achievement of children and young people with VI and improving their well-being
- 1.2. make strong links to effective practice in schools and other settings, including using ICT and other specialist technology to support teaching and learning
- 1.3. reflect recent research and inspection evidence and important developments and innovations relating to sight loss
- 1.4. develop participants' understanding of current legislation and government policies and initiatives in relation to sensory impairment, and the implications of these for children and young people with VI and the settings in which they are cared for and/or educated
- 1.5. develop participants' skills in consulting children and young people about issues that affect them individually and collectively and helping them express their views to others

⁹ Throughout this document the 'achievement' of children and young people should be taken as broadly defined to include not just academic attainment, but achievement in relation to all five Every Child Matters outcomes.

- 1.6. develop participants' skills in advising, supporting and collaborating with colleagues and working as part of multi-agency teams to meet the needs of children and young people and their families
 - 1.7. develop participants' skills in advising, supporting and working in partnership with parents/carers
 - 1.8. be available, as appropriate, for participants teaching children and young people with VI in any phase or context, including in early years and post-16 settings, within mainstream and specialist provision and in support and advisory roles, and equip them with the knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to teach effectively in their particular phase or context¹⁰
 - 1.9. enable participants to make an impact on practice by meeting the course outcomes
 - 1.10. involve rigorous assessment of participants against all of the course outcomes.
- 2. Respond to participants' identified training and development needs by offering appropriately differentiated provision that is of high quality, matched to participants' training and development needs, promotes progression towards the course outcomes, and makes best use of available resources.**

Successful applications for approval to run MQ courses will demonstrate that:

- 2.1. arrangements are in place for prior study and/or experience, where participants' needs are best met at that stage, eg. where a candidate needs to acquire a baseline of knowledge, skill or experience before starting training
- 2.2. an initial assessment of participants' training and development needs in relation to the course outcomes will inform an individual training plan for each participant, which takes full account of participants' prior knowledge and achievement, and enables each participant to work towards a personalised set of outcomes
- 2.3. in exceptional circumstances, suitably experienced prospective participants, eg. experienced staff from the independent sector, experienced teachers from SEN services, or those trained overseas, will be able to present themselves for assessment against the course outcomes without any training
- 2.4. provision, including visits and placements, is of high quality, tailored to individuals' circumstances and their training and development needs,

¹⁰ Participants must have qualified teacher status to be eligible to gain an MQ.

promotes progression towards the course outcomes and is cost-effective

2.5. arrangements are in place for those achieving the MQ to be helped to consider further professional objectives.

3. Be delivered flexibly, without compromising appropriate progression and quality of outcome, to maximise access for participants.

Successful applications for approval to run MQ courses will demonstrate that provision will be accessible and flexible, without compromising appropriate progression and quality of outcome, through:

3.1. complying with relevant duties under equalities legislation to enable all participants to access and participate fully in the course, eg. making reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates/participants

3.2. flexible course delivery¹¹, for example, opportunities where appropriate for participants to start their training at different times or to cover training provision in a different order or in different modes, eg. taught, blended or e-learning, full-time and part-time

3.3. ensuring that where e-learning is a feature of the provision, there will be:

- opportunities for participants to be supported through direct contact with tutors and peers, eg. through face-to-face opportunities, videoconferencing, telephone calls, web chat, etc.
- arrangements for supporting participants between sessions involving direct contact
- effective use of ICT in teaching and learning and to facilitate effective communication, eg. between providers and link schools, settings and services, participants and tutors, between tutors, and between participants.

4. Be informed by the needs of stakeholders¹² and involve them in development, delivery, evaluation and improvement of the provision.

Successful applications for approval to run MQ courses will demonstrate:

¹¹ This criterion requires providers to describe how they have addressed flexibility in the delivery of their mandatory qualification provision. It is not expected that provision will include all features given as examples

¹² Stakeholders in these criteria might include teachers, schools/other settings, employers, local authorities, parents/carers, children and young people, and others such as the relevant SEN associations and groups of disabled people, and current and former participants on MQ courses.

- 4.1. clear evidence that provision reflects evidence about the needs of the main stakeholders
- 4.2. details of how stakeholders have directly or indirectly influenced the development and improvement of provision
- 4.3. details of how stakeholders will be involved, directly or indirectly, in the evaluation and other aspects of provision.
- 5. **Be of a consistently high quality and subject to rigorous quality assurance procedures, and supported by mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and improving the impact of provision on participants' competence and the achievement of children and young people with VI.**

Applications from those seeking approval to run MQ courses should demonstrate:

- 5.1. the range of internal and external evaluation measures available and how the evidence gathered will be used to improve the quality and impact of provision
- 5.2. that systems are in place to recruit participants onto the course with sufficient prior knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to benefit from the course, and to meet the course outcomes by the end of the course
- 5.3. that systems are in place to verify that those accepted for MQ training are suitable to work with children and young people
- 5.4. that suitably qualified and experienced staff with up-to-date knowledge and skills in the relevant specialist area are available to deliver the course
- 5.5. that participants have access to a range of specialist expertise and appropriate high-quality placements
- 5.6. that there are sufficient specialist teaching resources (including ICT and other specialist technology), relevant to training teachers of children and young people with VI, to enable all participants to reach the course outcomes
- 5.7. mechanisms for ensuring that all those involved in delivery and assessment, including on teaching placements, eg. regional tutors or mentors, understand their roles and responsibilities and have the time, knowledge, understanding and skills to carry them out to a high standard

- 5.8. that means are in place to ensure that assessment judgements across provision are consistent, reliable and accurate, and that these will be moderated
- 5.9. specific evidence and explanation of the methods and measures to be used for evaluating the quality, standards and impact of provision on participants' competence and confidence and the achievement of children and young people, eg. regularly requiring participants to evaluate improvements in pupils' achievement as a result of particular aspects of their practice.
6. **Have, as a minimum requirement for successful completion, the mandatory qualification outcomes (annex A) so that those holding the qualification(s) make maximum impact on practice.**

ANNEX A – MINIMUM MANDATORY QUALIFICATION OUTCOMES

Those awarded a mandatory qualification in teaching children and young people with VI will:

1. Professional attributes

Relationships with children and young people and their families

- 1.1 have high expectations of learners¹³ with VI, including a commitment to ensuring that they can achieve their full potential in relation to the Every Child Matters outcomes
- 1.2 establish fair, respectful, trusting, supportive and constructive relationships with children and young people with VI and their families
- 1.3 possess the analytical, interpersonal and organisational skills necessary to work in an advisory role within and beyond the setting

Personal professional development

- 1.4 evaluate their performance and take responsibility for improving their practice through appropriate professional development
- 1.5 respond positively to support, advice and feedback
- 1.6 research and evaluate innovative and successful practices in relation to improving the achievement of learners with VI, and draw on research outcomes and other sources of external evidence to inform their own practice and that of colleagues

2 Professional knowledge and understanding

Frameworks and structures

- 2.1 have a good, up-to-date working knowledge and understanding of national legislation, policies and procedures and local policy, and guidelines in relation to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and, in particular, those relating to children and young people with VI
- 2.2 understand the continuum of educational provision available for learners with VI including, mainstream schools, specialised provision and special schools, and the role of support services
- 2.3 be familiar with relevant statutory and non-statutory frameworks and curricula and their associated assessment criteria, including those associated with the early years foundation stage, the National Curriculum, the national strategies, and education for pupils aged 14-19

¹³ The term 'learners' is used instead of 'children and young people' when learning per se is the main focus of the outcome. It refers to all children and young people including, where relevant, babies and toddlers and those aged 16 or above.

- 2.4 understand the implications of the National Curriculum and early years foundation stage inclusion statements¹⁴ and the guidance that sets these frameworks within a wider context
- 2.5 have a good working knowledge of school/setting self-evaluation and improvement processes, including the mechanisms for setting priorities, objectives and targets and translating these into policies and strategies
- 2.6 understand the purpose of the common assessment framework and how it is used

Working with children and young people with VI and their families

- 2.7 recognise the rights and expectations of children and young people with VI and the importance of providing opportunities for them to make informed choices and express their views about issues that affect them as individuals and collectively
- 2.8 know when and how to intervene to support children and young people with VI to communicate with others
- 2.9 recognise the rights and expectations of the parents/carers of children and young people with VI and know how to involve them in raising their children's achievement and improving their well-being
- 2.10 understand how voluntary and advocacy agencies can help children and young people with VI and their parents/carers to make a full contribution to decisions about education and care

Specialist knowledge and understanding

Terminology

- 2.11 understand current SEN and disability-specific terminology and how it is used in relation to the education and care of children and young people with VI

The visual system

- 2.12 understand that the causes of visual impairment can be cerebral or ocular
- 2.13 understand the anatomy and physiology of the eye and the ways in which the brain processes information in children and young people with VI
- 2.14 have a working knowledge of the physics of light and how the human visual system responds to light
- 2.15 understand how sight develops, the range and causes of sight loss, how visual impairments are identified, and their potential effect on learning
- 2.16 know the educational implications of the pathology and treatment of eye diseases and conditions

¹⁴ <http://www.nc.uk.net/inclusion.html#C> and the EYFS statutory framework, section 1.14.

Visual assessment

- 2.17 know the theory and application of current ophthalmic practice and protocols
- 2.18 know the importance of assessing how learners with VI process visual information
- 2.19 know the strengths and limitations of different forms of ophthalmic assessment
- 2.20 know the principles of assessing functional vision and how appropriate communication strategies can enhance this
- 2.21 know how low-vision devices help a child or young person make effective use of functional vision
- 2.22 know the range of available low-vision devices and how to use them appropriately and effectively in different light conditions to minimise the adverse effects of sight loss on progress and achievement
- 2.23 know how to check and carry out everyday maintenance of low-vision devices and evaluate their effectiveness
- 2.24 understand and take account of the health and safety implications of using specialist equipment and technologies

Impact of sight loss

- 2.25 understand the impact of all degrees of sight loss, including progressive or sudden onset, on the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of learners with VI and on their families, and know ways to support them through difficulties
- 2.26 understand the impact of exceptionally high or low cognitive ability in conjunction with sight loss

Mobility and orientation

- 2.27 understand the principles and practice of mobility, orientation and self-help

The learning environment

- 2.28 understand the principles of good lighting design and the factors that affect the effectiveness of illumination, and know a range of resources and techniques that can be used to provide appropriate and effective lighting for learners with VI

Language, communication and interaction

- 2.29 understand the relationship between visual function and the development of communication skills and how this affects learning
- 2.30 understand the physical, linguistic and psychological aspects of communication in order to determine the level of receptive and expressive language skills of learners with VI
- 2.31 know a range of informal and formal procedures for assessing the communication skills of learners with VI, including for those at the very earliest stages of communication

- 2.32 know the impact of long-standing communication difficulties on the cognitive, emotional and social development of learners with VI and ways to minimise these
- 2.33 recognise the specific or more unusual patterns of communication demonstrated by children and young people with significant developmental delay or other form of communication or language disorder
- 2.34 know how to promote the expressive and receptive language of learners with VI and their non-verbal communication, using the most appropriate mode of communication and additional auditory, tactile and other methods to reinforce spoken language, where appropriate
- 2.35 understand the principles underlying the development of alternative and augmented communication systems, including Braille and Moon, and how to apply them appropriately in a curriculum that builds on learners' strengths
- 2.36 know how to take account of learners for whom English is an additional language, particularly in relation to possible cultural differences
- 2.37 know the principles of haptic perception

Teaching and learning

- 2.38 know how parents/carers and professionals can work together to promote learning and achievement for babies and children with VI in the early years foundation stage
- 2.39 understand the impact of sight loss on the learning styles of learners with VI, and how learning and teaching and assessment can be modified to enable them to make good progress
- 2.40 understand the assessment procedures associated with externally validated qualifications, national curriculum tests and the early years foundation stage, and know how to arrange access arrangements, where necessary, to enable learners with VI to have their achievements recognised
- 2.41 know a range of ICT hardware and software to help assess the needs of learners with VI and to support their learning
- 2.42 know how to teach Braille and understand the skills necessary for a child or young person to learn Braille

Literacy, mathematics and ICT

- 2.43 appreciate the difficulties that some learners with VI have in acquiring and using literacy, mathematical and ICT skills, and know appropriate approaches, strategies and interventions to enable them to make good progress in learning such skills

Promoting positive behaviour

- 2.44 understand that the behaviour of other people, the language and the physical and social environment can have a strong influence on the emotional and behavioural responses of learners with VI

- 2.45 know how to build positive relationships with learners with VI and understand how positive relationships can promote good behaviour and self-esteem
- 2.46 know how to rebuild damaged emotional relationships between adults and children/young people, and between peers
- 2.47 understand when more complex situations might need specific interventions from another professional

Achievement and diversity

- 2.48 understand issues of stereotyping and equal opportunities as they apply to children and young people with VI
- 2.49 know how to encourage and support learners with VI to be as independent as possible
- 2.50 know how to make links, where appropriate, between learning and relevant accreditation schemes, to encourage a mature response to real opportunities and challenges
- 2.51 have a good knowledge of opportunities for school leavers with VI, and liaise with appropriate information, advice and guidance services to help learners make informed choices

Health and well-being

- 2.52 understand that some learners with VI may take longer to mature linguistically, socially and emotionally than their peers
- 2.53 understand the impact of long-standing or progressive sight loss on the emotions, learning, behaviour and quality of life of learners with VI and on their families
- 2.54 know how to help learners with VI to develop social and emotional skills
- 2.55 know how to promote knowledge and skills related to personal, social and health education, and sex and relationship education
- 2.56 know how to make full use of opportunities for learners with VI to make friends and enjoy leisure pursuits

3 Professional skills

Specialist skills

- 3.1 have completed the grade II literary Braille code
- 3.2 make effective use of specialised informal and formal assessment techniques, including the sensitive and focused use of observation, supported by, for example, developmental scales and/or orientation and mobility checklists
- 3.3 interpret optometric information competently
- 3.4 contribute to assessing the functional vision of learners with VI
- 3.5 use specialised assessment information, including that provided by colleagues from other specialist disciplines, to inform assessment

- 3.6 contribute to the design and implementation of a coherent and structured communication programme tailored to the current level of language development/communication of individual learners
- 3.7 support the use of low-vision devices and other specialist technology to maximise and, where appropriate, develop the visual or compensatory skills of learners with VI

Mobility, orientation and independence

- 3.8 work with mobility specialists to design and implement mobility and independence programmes
- 3.9 use specialised equipment and devices to support the mobility and independence of learners with VI

Planning

- 3.10 anticipate the barriers to learning and participation that may arise for learners with VI, and differentiate/modify teaching approaches and other provision to minimise these
- 3.11 use the information gained from assessment and from parents/carers, and advice from specialist professionals or services, to set targets, plan teaching approaches and other provision that will help learners with VI make good progress
- 3.12 use targets to develop criteria to assess and evaluate the progress of learners with VI and to establish a timescale for review and evaluation
- 3.13 contribute to transition planning to ensure that transfer from one setting/school to another is as smooth as possible for learners with VI

Teaching

- 3.14 identify individual learning outcomes and develop, implement and evaluate a range of approaches to help learners with VI achieve those outcomes
- 3.15 select and use the most effective approaches, eg. visual, oral/aural, tactile and kinaesthetic, to enhance communication and learning
- 3.16 differentiate or personalise provision to match and develop the capabilities of learners with VI
- 3.17 design and produce teaching and learning materials in an appropriate medium, eg. audio, tactile diagrams, Braille, enlarged and modified text, simplified diagrams
- 3.18 modify and adapt teaching materials, resources and equipment, including ICT, to make them accessible to learners with VI
- 3.19 use specialist equipment and technology to overcome or reduce the impact of sight loss
- 3.20 provide a wide range of opportunities for the development of receptive and expressive language
- 3.21 encourage learners with VI to become more independent by helping them to develop mobility, orientation, organisational, information processing, problem solving and thinking skills

- 3.22 encourage learners with VI to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and use of specialist equipment by involving them in making decisions about the types and levels of support they receive
- 3.23 assist older learners to develop the knowledge and skills they will need in adult life, further or higher education, post-school training opportunities and employment

Assessing, monitoring and giving feedback

- 3.24 use appropriate means to monitor the progress of learners with VI
- 3.25 include learners with VI and their parents/carers in assessment and target-setting processes and procedures, ensuring they understand what targets have been set and why
- 3.26 monitor the use and effectiveness of specialised approaches, devices, equipment and resources to ensure that they achieve their intended outcomes and result in discernible progress for learners with VI

Reviewing, teaching, learning and assessment

- 3.27 collate and present the educational implications of multi-disciplinary assessment and parental contributions and views to inform curricular and placement decisions where appropriate
- 3.28 use provision mapping to determine how well provision for learners with VI matches their needs, to identify ineffective or missing provision, and to demonstrate accountability to parents/carers, managers, local authority officers and/or Ofsted inspectors
- 3.29 compile summary information on the progress of learners with VI in a form that gives direct evidence on the nature of any added value provided by teaching and learning
- 3.30 prepare and write accurate assessment reports that can be understood and used by teachers, other professionals and parents/carers

Promoting positive behaviour

- 3.31 have high expectations of the behaviour of learners with VI
- 3.32 take account of the effects of sight loss on the learning and behaviour of learners with VI
- 3.33 encourage learners with VI to monitor and control their own behaviour
- 3.34 foster perseverance and concentration by structuring tasks and learning so that learners with VI are clear about what is expected of them
- 3.35 encourage learners with VI to persevere with their learning when difficulties arise
- 3.36 use effective strategies to promote positive behaviour, manage difficult situations and resolve conflict and, where necessary, use the range of management techniques outlined in the school/setting's policy on restraint

Learning environment

- 3.37 understand the interplay between a learner's state of mind and sense of well-being and their learning and social environment, and the impact this can have on their learning
- 3.38 create safe learning environments that encourage independence and mobility, help develop social interaction, and support the emotional health and well-being of learners with VI
- 3.39 assess and review settings/classrooms for accessibility, health and safety
- 3.40 challenge stereotyping of children and young people with VI and use effective strategies to combat bullying
- 3.41 identify ways of reducing the barriers to learning and participation for learners with VI arising from the physical and social environment, and understand how these may change in different phases of education and at transfer from one setting/school to another
- 3.42 make effective use of environments, including managing lighting and acoustics, wherever possible

Teamworking and collaboration

- 3.43 liaise effectively and work in partnership with the parents/carers of learners with VI, providing information, advice and support as appropriate
- 3.44 understand the roles and responsibilities of the range of specialist services and agencies that work with learners with VI and their families
- 3.45 work collaboratively with colleagues, other specialists and parents/carers to assess and support learners with VI, and to maximise their opportunities and achievement through joint planning, implementation, evaluation and reporting
- 3.46 direct and oversee the work of support staff ensuring that they understand the targets of learners with VI and are clear about their role in helping them to achieve these

Advising others

- 3.47 model best practice for others working with learners with VI
- 3.48 make well-founded appraisals of situations upon which they are asked to advise, applying high-level skills of observation and analysis and evaluation
- 3.49 observe and analyse the practice of colleagues working with learners with VI, recognise strengths and areas for improvement, and provide sensitive and constructive feedback
- 3.50 provide professional direction to colleagues, support staff and parents/carers to improve their practice in working with learners with VI through, for example, advice, training or coaching
- 3.51 advise on assessing baseline performance and the use of assessment, identifying strengths as well as needs, so that any progress resulting from special provision can be determined

- 3.52 advise on the use and effectiveness of specialised techniques and materials
- 3.53 support the specialist contributions of other colleagues, teaching assistants, the wider school workforce, therapists and other professionals so that they have the maximum impact on learners with VI and their families
- 3.54 know how to cope effectively with the emotional responses that may arise from working with learners with VI
- 3.55 advise on a range of initiatives linked to access and disability discrimination, and contribute to access planning for learners with VI
- 3.56 be part of, or work closely with, leadership teams, taking a lead in developing, implementing and evaluating policies and practices that contribute to the achievement and well-being of learners with VI.