



OFFICE FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION

INSPECTING SUBJECTS AND ASPECTS 11-18

**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
IN ORDINARY SCHOOLS**

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INSPECTING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN ORDINARY SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

This guidance is written for the member of the team responsible for the co-ordination of the inspection of special educational needs (SEN). It will also be useful to the registered inspector and to other team members as they inspect their subjects.

The *Framework* requires judgements to be made on the quality of special educational provision and on the educational standards achieved by pupils on the school's register of SEN. Inspection of SEN is an intrinsic and often a central feature of all inspections. This should be reflected in the detail provided in reports.

CO-ORDINATING THE INSPECTION

A suitably qualified and competent member of the inspection team should co-ordinate the inspection of SEN. When a school has a designated unit or resource base for pupils with SEN - for example, visual or hearing impairment or learning difficulty - at least one team member should have relevant qualifications and/or experience.

BEFORE THE INSPECTION

- Ensure that all inspectors are familiar with the *SEN Code of Practice (1994)*, the *Disability Discrimination Act (1995)*, and *Meeting Special Educational Needs: A programme of action (1998)*.
- See that the whole team is briefed on:
 - the numbers of pupils on the register of SEN at each stage of the Code of Practice;
 - the range and type of special need at each stage;
 - (when there is a designated provision or unit) details of the number of pupils and type of special need provided;
 - information about SEN provision such as specific departmental arrangements, in-class support, withdrawal arrangements, setting, particular arrangements for pupils with statements, and special courses for pupils aged 14 to 16;
 - the deployment of teachers for SEN and learning support assistants;
 - how the school makes use of individual education plans (IEPs);
 - issues raised by parents.

- Help the registered inspector in arranging for the evaluation of:
 - the quality and impact of the SEN policy;
 - the effectiveness of provision within departments;
 - the quality of in-class support;
 - the quality of individual or group teaching in withdrawal groups;
 - the quality of teaching in low attaining sets;
 - the progress made by pupils across all stages of the Code of Practice and, in the case of stages 2-5, in relation to targets set in IEPs and at annual reviews of statements;
 - the effectiveness of target setting and reviewing in IEPs (especially for literacy and numeracy) and at annual and transitional reviews of statements;
 - the management, coordination and funding of provision for special educational needs.

SCHOOLS WITH DESIGNATED PROVISION OR UNITS

- For these schools, make sure that you have sufficient evidence to make judgements both on the progress made by pupils associated with the unit (whether fully integrated or not) and on other pupils on the school's register for SEN.
- Include pupils associated with the designated provision or unit for pupils with SEN and other pupils with a statement, when you give the results of National Curriculum tests and assessments for pupils by age 14 and externally accredited courses for pupils to age 16.

When comparing attainment with all schools, an explanatory sentence can immediately follow the table in the main findings and in the key indicators section of the report (3.2), giving the number of pupils with statements and the special needs served by the designated provision. When comparing with similar schools, an asterisk can accompany the grade in the main findings - for example, when there is a designated provision serving pupils with learning difficulties, whose attainment can never be expected to reach what is typically achieved for their age.

- In the section on the characteristics of the school, refer to pupils having SEN and to the nature of the dedicated provision made for them.
- Report your judgements in the appropriate sections.

You should not write a separate section but include your judgements in the various sections, as relevant. You may use sub-headings if necessary, to distinguish between judgements on the designated provision and on other pupils on the register of SEN.

ATTAINMENT AND PROGRESS

Interpreting data

- Incorporate the attainment of pupils with SEN into the overall judgements by ages 14, 16 and 18.

Your view about the standards attained in the school by these ages covers all pupils. Standards which are higher or lower than they should be for pupils with special needs should be reported with an emphasis on achievement in accredited courses. When a school is resourced to provide for specific groups of pupils with learning difficulties, this should be made clear in the report, distinguishing where necessary from other pupils with SEN.

Using evidence from documentation and observation

- In liaison with subject inspectors, judge progress for pupils at stage 1. Evaluate and report on the progress pupils make towards the targets set in IEPs, or at annual reviews for those with statements.

It is good practice for pupils to have one IEP, with targets that apply to all subjects of the curriculum, enabling the pupil to gain access to the work. Progress towards the targets set can thus be observed across a wide range of subjects. Targets are likely to relate to communication skills, including reading, writing, speaking and listening, numeracy, and to aspects of personal development, including behaviour. Progress in relation to aspects of personal development should be reported in the section on attitudes, behaviour and personal development (section 4.2).

- Evaluate the attainment reached and the progress made by a representative cross-section of pupils with SEN, commenting on literacy and numeracy.

Inspectors should have access to IEPs for stages 2-5 and to pupils' statements of SEN and related documentation. You should try to take account of pupils at different stages of the Code of Practice. You will need to see previous IEPs and reviews, to track progress over time. Information about exemptions and special arrangements for tests or examinations should be available from the examination officer or the school's co-ordinator of special educational needs (SENCO).

- Gather first-hand evidence of progress from your **observation** of lessons, **looking at** pupils' written work, and **talking with** pupils.

ATTITUDES, BEHAVIOUR AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Judge these as critical indicators of whether specific educational needs are being met.

For many pupils, targets in IEPs will relate to aspects of personal development, including behaviour, designed to increase their independence and autonomy, often in association with learning objectives.

- Take account of progress since admission and of variations in behaviour across the school.

When schools have designated units or resource bases which cater for pupils who are disruptive or have emotional behavioural difficulties, behaviour may on occasions be unsatisfactory because of pupils' previous educational histories. Evidence will derive from lessons and less structured times of the day such as at lunch or other break-times. Pupils with SEN may also be able to offer their own perception about their attitudes, behaviour and personal development, and their perception of other pupils' attitudes to them. You should consider the extent to which pupils with SEN may also be able to learn and socialise independently and not be dependent on adults, either in class or around the school.

ATTENDANCE

- Note any significant variations in the attendance of pupils on the register of SEN.

TEACHING

- Judge the impact which teaching has on the progress of pupils at all stages of the Code of Practice, referring to the different disability groups represented in the school.

Judgements should indicate settings in which the teaching has taken place - for example, withdrawal groups, in-class support or lessons where no support is available but where pupils with SEN are being taught.

- Make sure that the evidence is sufficient in quality and range for judging:
 - in each department, the effectiveness of planning, and the attention to the needs of pupils at stage 1;
 - the effectiveness of liaison between SEN staff, subject and pastoral staff in teaching pupils at stages 2-5;
 - the clarity and practicality of IEPs;
 - the effectiveness of learning support assistants in supporting pupils' learning in lessons;
 - the attention paid to specific disability needs as they affect learning;
 - the effectiveness of rewards and sanctions, particularly in their consistent application across departments.

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

Subject departments should make general curricular arrangements for pupils at stage 1 and specific arrangements, in liaison with the SENCO, for pupils at stages 2 to 5.

Examples of general and specific provision are: support for literacy, numeracy or other communication skills; special courses for pupils from 14 to 16; independence or mobility training; and non-confidential specialised provision for disaffected or disturbed pupils.

- Judge the quality of curricular provision by evaluating:
 - the procedures for the identification of pupils with SEN;
 - the extent to which the school's policy for assessment and recording progress is in harmony with identification procedures for moving pupils up and down the stages of the SEN Code of Practice;
 - how well the school uses previous IEPs and other records, including information from primary schools, and sets new targets in IEPs;
 - for pupils with statements, the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for implementing the provision set out in statements, while maintaining a broad curriculum relevant to their needs;
 - the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the progress of pupils at each stage of the Code of Practice and at annual and transitional reviews;
 - the extent to which pupils with SEN are integrated into all aspects of the life of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

It is well established that effective leadership and management at both governor ¹ and senior management level have a positive impact on provision for SEN.

- See whether statutory requirements are met:
 - for the school to pay regard to the Code of Practice;
 - to publish information on provision for SEN, including the means by which parents make complaints;
 - to report annually to parents on the funding allocated to SEN and to report on how successfully the policy is implemented;
 - under the Disability Discrimination Act, to report annually to parents on arrangements for admitting disabled pupils as defined under the terms of that act; showing how the school ensures that such pupils have equality of access to provision, and what facilities are provided to enable pupils to gain access.

¹ The governing body must oversee SEN and set up appropriate staffing and funding arrangements. It must also designate a 'responsible person' to ensure that, where a pupil has special educational needs, those needs are made known to all who are likely to teach that pupil.

- Judge the extent to which the leadership and management are effective in that:
 - the governing body (possibly through a nominated governor and/or sub-committee) is active both in having strategic oversight of SEN and in communicating annually to parents on progress and success in implementing the policy;
 - senior management takes responsibility for SEN by supporting the SENCO and ensuring, through monitoring teaching and any changes to the curriculum, that departments work in line with the policy;
 - SEN has place in the school development plan;
 - the SENCO's role and job description enable SEN provision to be effective;
 - funding allocated for SEN is clearly identified and supports development in SEN provision, including provision for pupils with statements;
 - the school is aware of local education authority services for SEN and makes effective links in relation to pupils at stage 3 of the Code of Practice;
 - the school involves parents at all levels of the Code of Practice, including procedures for reviewing pupils' progress;
 - there are satisfactory arrangements for reporting on pupils' achievements to parents and to those responsible for their further education, training or work.

The impact of effective leadership on SEN will be seen in all lessons reflected in the involvement, commitment and understanding of staff in identifying and meeting the needs of pupils on the school's register of SEN. It will also be evident in the priority given to SEN in departmental schemes of work and development plans, and the extent to which successful implementation is reflected in classroom practice, through the availability of resources and the deployment of staff.

Further evidence will come from the records, kept by the SENCO, of liaison with departments over time, and of the effectiveness of work with those departments in modifying practice, in order to meet individual pupils' needs.

EFFICIENCY

- Report in this section your judgement on the efficiency and effectiveness with which resources allocated to the school for SEN are managed.

The inspection team should first be clear about all funds and other resources allocated for SEN, including delegated or devolved funding for pupils with statements. The figure should include what the school itself allocates for SEN.

Details on funding allocated for SEN will come from:

- *the headteacher's form;*

- *budgetary information in accordance with the policy of the local education authority on deployment of funds at stages 3-5;*
 - *information from pupils' statements.*
- Evaluate how efficiently departments use resources and deploy staffing, including learning support assistants, to meet identified needs.
 - Assess how efficiently SEN staff are deployed to enable provision for SEN to meet identified needs.

Key indicators are that identified special educational needs throughout the school are met with provision that is flexible and effective, leading to academic progress, improvements in personal development and enhanced life prospects.

Evidence on the quality of strategic planning for SEN will reveal whether such plans are costed and monitored for their cost-effectiveness, as part of the review of the SEN policy, the success of which is reported annually to parents.

Judgements on the efficiency and effectiveness of funds allocated for SEN contribute significantly to the overall judgement on value for money.

REPORTING

- **Always** report your judgements under the 'Other aspects of the school' in the main findings, and in the sections on attainment and progress, teaching, curriculum and assessment, and efficiency. Use the other sections where appropriate, including the main findings and key issues.
- Make sure that your judgements:
 - reflect both the incidence and the range of SEN which the school caters for;
 - provide a clear and coherent picture of the pupils' achievements and of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision.

ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

This is one of a set of booklets which make up *Inspecting subjects and aspects 11-18*. The set consists of:

- an introductory booklet, *General guidance*, which is for all inspectors who evaluate the work of secondary age pupils - it is mainly about inspecting subjects;
- separate booklets on inspecting specific subjects and aspects; the contents page of *General guidance* shows the subjects and aspects which have booklets.

The main points in the *General guidance* are summarised in each subject, but if you are inspecting the work of secondary age pupils you should read the introductory booklet so that you are fully in the picture of what you have to do.

The contents of all the booklets are on the Internet and can be accessed from OFSTED's website [<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>]. This will allow you to obtain guidance for individual subjects or aspects.

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