



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & INCLUSION POLICY

November 2017

RATIONALE

Cookstown High School, through this policy document, seeks to ensure that the needs of all the pupils with special educational needs (SEN) will be addressed and provision made available to them throughout or at any time during their school career. In addition the school acknowledges their right to have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, including maximum possible access to the NI Curriculum and accordingly we will endeavour to facilitate these opportunities.

As a school we recognize that some pupils during their school career may have Special Educational Needs and/or a permanent or temporary disability and in the interests of these children we will make every possible arrangement to provide for their individual needs.

THE LEGAL BASIS for this SEN policy is determined by:

- The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs 1998 (hereafter referred to as the Code of Practice).
- The Special Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order (Northern Ireland) 2005 (hereafter referred to as SENDO). The new SENDO provision strengthens the right to an ordinary school place for children with a Statement, unless it is against the wishes of parents or it is incompatible with the efficient education of others.
- Supplement to the Code of Practice 2005 (DE) –Disability Discrimination Order (Northern Ireland) (2005)
- Every School a Good School 2009 (DE)
- Good Practice Guidelines 2009 (Inter-Board)
- Provisional Criteria for Statutory Assessment (2009)

CONTEXT & ETHOS

The policy is set within the context of our Mission Statement, ‘to provide and promote Excellence, Opportunity and Support’.

The policy operates within the context of the school Statement of Ethos:

“As a school founded upon Christian principles, we believe in and celebrate the uniqueness of each individual and encourage all members of our community to show respect for all.

“We seek the development of character through knowledge believing each individual has a duty to build a community, to strive to do their best, to show compassion for those in need, and to take responsibility for their own words and actions.

“Cookstown High School seeks to develop young people who are independent learners and active citizens.”

AIMS

The Aims of this Policy are:

1. To provide a framework for action.
2. To ensure consistency of approach with regard to the procedures to be followed when dealing with a particular issue.

3. To provide a standard for evaluating performance.
4. To have clear procedures for the admission of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs.
5. To identify pupils with SEN as early as possible, through a variety of means and in consultation with relevant individuals and bodies.
6. To encourage all those involved with the pupil's education to support the pupil and encourage them to achieve their potential.
7. To provide support and appropriate provision for pupils identified with Special Educational Needs to enable each learner in the school community to achieve their potential and overcome barriers to learning.
8. To promote inclusion, endeavouring to ensure that all children with SEN/Disability feel valued and have a positive self-image.
9. To ensure that pupils with SEN have full entitlement (unless otherwise specified in their Statement of Educational Needs) and access to a high quality education within a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum so that they can reach their full potential and enhance their self-esteem.
10. To encourage the use of a range of teaching strategies which incorporate different learning styles and ensure effective learning by offering continual and appropriate forms of educational provision by the most efficient use of all available resources.
11. To develop and utilise all available resources in support of pupils with SEN.
12. To offer a broad curriculum which will create a caring and supportive environment in which pupils can grow intellectually, socially, physically and emotionally, with due regard to developing qualities and attitudes such as integrity, self-respect and respect for others, politeness, independence, perseverance and setting worthwhile goals for themselves.
13. To review progress with IEP targets so that each pupil's performance can be monitored and adapted appropriately.
14. To encourage parental involvement in all aspects of SEN provision, and to consider the wishes of the child when planning and implementing SEN provision. (When considering the wishes of the child, his/her age and powers of understanding must be taken into account.)
15. To promote collaboration amongst teachers in the implementation of the SEN policy.
16. To work closely with all EA departments and other outside agencies in order to improve the quality of support available for each pupil with special educational needs.

DEFINITION OF TERMS RELATING TO SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

As set down in Article 3 of the 1996 Order,

1. "A child has 'special educational needs' if:
"he/she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him/her".
2. A child has a 'learning difficulty' if:
 - a) *he/she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his/her age*
 - b) *he/she has a disability which either prevents or hinders him from making use of the educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of his/her age in ordinary schools."*
3. 'Special education provision' means educational provision which is different from, or additional to, the provision made generally for children of comparable age."
(Code of practice 1998 paragraph: 1.4)
4. Disability
"Someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities." Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

SEN PROVISIONS OF SENDO

"The new law will strengthen the right to an ordinary school place for children with a Statement, unless it is against the wishes of parents or it is incompatible with the efficient education of others."

'Children who have Special Educational Needs but do not have a statement, must, except in specific circumstances, be educated in an ordinary school.'

Article 3(1) SENDO 2005

INCLUSION

Inclusion is about the quality of children's experience; how they are helped to learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the school. (Removing Barriers to Achievement 2004)

In order to make sure that we meet our pupils' needs and include them in all aspects of school life, this SEN policy links closely with all our other policies and documents based on supporting pupils, such as:

Pastoral Care Policy

Child Protection Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Classroom Assistant Handbook.

It has due regard for the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (Department of Education 1998) and the Provisional Criteria for Initiating Statutory Assessments of Special Educational Need and for Making Statements of Special Educational Need (NI Education and Library Boards, 2009). The statutory context is set down in the Education (NI) Order 1996 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005 (SENDO).

KEY PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSION

The following areas will encompass all aspects of SEN as highlighted in the Code of Practice:

- Learning difficulties
- Specific learning difficulties
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Physical disabilities
- Sensory impairments
- Speech and language difficulties
- Medical conditions

The Department of Education has identified seven 'areas' of Special Educational Need and, within each area, a number of SEN categories to be used when recording details of pupils with Special Educational Needs (2005):

1. Cognitive and Learning

- Dyslexia/Specific Learning Difficulties
- Dyscalculia
- Dyspraxia/Developmental Coordination Disorder
- Mild Learning Difficulties
- Moderate Learning Difficulties
- Severe Learning Difficulties
- Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties
- Unspecified Cognitive and Learning Difficulties

2. Social, Emotional & Behavioural

- Social, Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties
- ADD/ADHD

3. Communication and Interaction

- Speech and Language Difficulties
- Autism
- Asperger's Syndrome

4. Sensory

- Severe/profound hearing loss
- Mild/moderate hearing loss
- Blind
- Partially sighted
- Multi-sensory Impairment

5. Physical

- Cerebral Palsy
- Spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus
- Muscular dystrophy
- Significant accidental injury
- Other physical

6. Medical conditions/Syndromes

- Epilepsy
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Anaphylaxis
- Down
- Other medical conditions/syndromes
- Interaction of complex medical needs
- Mental Health Issues

7. Other (page 69 of Code of Practice 1998)

(a) Gifted and Talented

“The term Gifted and Talented is used to describe those students who are achieving or who have the potential to achieve a level substantially beyond the rest of their peer group inside their particular school. Gifted and Talented pupils may also present with a learning difficulty.”

(Guidelines for Teachers NCCA/CEA 2007)

(b) “The term dual or multiple exceptionality (DME) is used to describe a group of educationally vulnerable pupils who belong characteristically to both the SEN and G&T groups. In many instances it is the features of SEN that are dominant and the other gifts, talents and exceptional abilities may be hidden or partially hidden.”

(Guidelines on preventing underachievement DCFS Ref: 00061-2007BKT-EN)

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Decisions on admission are made by the Board of Governors and in liaison with the School’s SENCo and the SEN section of the Education Authority (EA)

Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs will be admitted to School in the event that:

- a) they meet the criteria for admissions.
- b) their attendance would not be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for other pupils.
- c) their attendance would not be incompatible with the efficient use of resources.

This arrangement is in line with SENDO legislation.

ACCESS TO CURRICULUM

Pupils with special educational needs will have access to the Common Curriculum at a level appropriate to their age, ability, aptitude and attainment, and with due regard to the objectives set out in their Statement, where applicable. In consultation with parents and outside agencies guidance will be given on appropriate choice of subjects at key transition points, examination entries, careers and further and higher education options. In addition, pupils with identified special educational needs will be encouraged to participate as fully as is feasible in the extra-curricular activities of school. Risk assessments will be undertaken, where deemed necessary, to ensure pupil safety. The need for reasonable adjustments will be assessed and implemented in accordance with legislation. At present pupils with SEN/Disabilities have equal access to all areas of the school building. The school is fully accessible to wheelchair users and pupils with physical disabilities. Special Examinations Access Arrangements are applied, where relevant, and in accordance with the national regulations agreed by the Joint Council for Qualifications, to provide access for pupils with SEN.

IDENTIFICATION

Cookstown High School acknowledges that early identification and assessment are crucial to providing appropriate interventions and laying the foundation for maximum learning and progress.

Pupils requiring special educational needs provision may be identified in the following ways:

- a) Liaison with feeder primary school prior to admission stage.
- b) Parental concerns expressed to School. This will be followed up by the issue of a questionnaire to be completed by parents and written permission for the designated teachers to carry out relevant tests with the pupil.
- c) Information from other school(s).
- d) Completion of documentation by subject teachers, indicating areas of concern noted by teacher.
- d) Observation and monitoring of pupil's work, progress, behaviour, attitude, social interaction and organisation using a coordinated approach between subject teachers, Curriculum Leaders, SLT, Heads of Year, SENCo, Classroom and General Assistants, pupil, parents and any other individual who is capable of making informed contributions.
- e) Results of tests carried out with the pupil by the SENCo and Assistant SENCo.
- f) A Statement of Special Educational Needs.
- g) Report from ASD service.

In all cases appropriate evidence will be obtained and documented. All evidence will be communicated and transferred to the SENCO who reports to the Vice Principal Pastoral and the Headmaster.

ANNUAL REPORT

Each year the Board of Governors report on SEN provision in the school. Information for this report is provided by the SENCo.

INTERVENTION AND ASSESSMENT

Pupils' needs will be identified and assessed within the 5 Stage approach stipulated in the DENI Code of Practice.(Appendix 1) The means of assessment will depend upon the nature of the pupil's need. The following assessment tools are likely to be used:

1. Observation by teacher.
2. Diagnostic tests
3. Interviews with pupil and parents.
4. Medical and psychological evidence.
5. IEP outcomes
6. Liaison with and recommendations by the Behaviour Support Team, ASD support team, Educational Psychology Service, CAMHS, and any other relevant body, such as Social Workers, Therapists, MAST, Doctors etc.
7. CAT tests in Year 8 and Year 11.
8. Spelling Tests –Year 8.
9. School assessment – Class Tests, School Examinations.
10. Medical Advice and/or Care Plans.
11. PIE and PIM scores from Primary School.
12. Statement of Special Educational Needs.
13. Parental information (SENCo Questionnaire).
14. School-based behavioural records.

In the event of a Special Educational Need being identified, the procedures outlined in the Code of Practice (Appendix 6) are followed. Parents are informed and are invited to become involved in drawing up an Individual Education Plan or IEP for the pupil.

There are currently two formats of IEP in place: the original format which is used for current Year 11-Year 14 pupils (Appendix 7) and the up-dated version which is being used for current Year 8 – Year 10 pupils (Appendix 8). Year 8 parents whose child has been on the SEN Register in P7 are invited into school to discuss their child's needs and strengths at the beginning of October. A target or targets are chosen for Semester 1, using the information available, and full details of the pupil's difficulties and strengths are recorded, along with any other relevant information. Staff are made aware of the IEP and asked to support the pupil in whatever way is relevant in their subject, in order to help the pupil make maximum progress towards achieving their target. The IEPs are stored in the Staff area, SEN, IEP folder relating to the current year. In mid- February staff are asked to record outcomes of the targets. The SENCo reviews the outcomes, discusses them with the pupil and informs parents. The targets may be changed, amended or replaced with new ones for Semester 2, depending on the outcomes of Semester 1. Details of suggested new targets are sent home to parents with a request to either agree with them or contact the SENCo to review the targets.

RESPONSIBILITIES

In keeping with the Education (NI) Order 1996 and the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs 1998, (COP para 2.3-2.6)

- (a) **The Board of Governors** are responsible for ensuring that every child is a valued and valuable member of the School community with equal access to the same opportunities and high quality learning experiences.

The role of the Board of Governors of a mainstream school is to exercise its functions in relation to the school with a view to ensuring that provision is made for registered pupils with special educational needs. The Board of Governors has a statutory duty to:

- Take account of the provisions in the DE Code of Practice on identifying and assessing special educational needs;
- Use their best endeavours to provide for pupils identified with SEN and that parents are notified of their child's special needs;
- Maintain and operate a policy on SEN;
- Ensure that where a registered pupil has special educational needs, those needs are made known to all who are likely to teach them;
- Ensure that the teachers in the school know the importance of identifying those registered pupils with SEN and of providing appropriate teaching;
- Allocate appropriate funding for special educational needs and disability; and prepare and take forward a written accessibility plan.

- (b) The **Headmaster**, has overall responsibility for Special Educational Needs. This involves:

- Developing a whole-school culture of inclusiveness.
- Ensuring that a pupil's needs are identified, assessed, provided for and reviewed regularly.
- Keeping the Board of Governors informed about SEN issues.
- Deciding on the allocation of funding for the SEN budget.
- Ensuring the SLT are actively involved in the management of SEN within the school.
- Working in close partnership with the SENCo.
- Liaising with parents and external agencies as required.
- Providing a secure facility for the storage of records relating to Special Educational Needs.

(c) The **Vice Principal Pastoral**, is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of Special Educational Needs provision (in conjunction with the SENCO)

(d) The **Special Education Needs Co-ordinator**, has responsibility for the operation of the Special Educational Needs Policy. The SENCo is responsible for:

- The day to day operation of the school's special educational needs policy
- Responding to requests for advice from other teachers
- Coordinating provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs
- Overseeing all the records on pupils with SEN
- Organising the deployment of Classroom and General Assistants
- Advising and reporting to the Headmaster and SLT on all matters relating to the development, co-ordination and implementation of the whole school policy on Special Educational Needs.
- Overseeing and coordinating the identification of pupils with Special Educational Needs.
- Liaising with teachers, classroom assistants, parents and outside agencies regarding appropriate strategies of support.
- Disseminating relevant information to appropriate persons.
- Maintaining a Register of pupils with Special Education Needs.
- Drawing up and maintaining IEPs for pupils.
- Drawing up and maintaining Transition Plans for statemented pupils.
- Managing parent and pupil annual review of statements.
- Using standardised and diagnostic testing to assess pupils upon entry in Year 8 (and at other times as required so that teaching and learning can take place in relation to individual needs).
- Working with the Shadow SENCo in testing pupils in Years 10-14 and making judgements on any action to be taken as a result
- Liaising with the external and internal exams coordinators to ensure access arrangements are in place.
- Completing Form 8 and making applications for Examination Access Arrangements
- Ordering Modified examination papers from the Examining body
- Monitoring the effectiveness of Special Educational Needs provision (with Vice Principal, Pastoral)
- Making arrangements for pupils whose special needs are met through the provision of home tuition.
- Liaising with external agencies.
- Establishing the SEN in-service training requirements of the staff, and contributing as appropriate to their training.

All members of the School Community have a responsibility to act in accordance with the SEN Policy. All staff are involved in the support of all learners within their classes, whatever their individual needs, to enable them to reach their learning potential. All staff are therefore involved in the implementation and development of the Policy. It is envisaged that most needs will be met within the normal classroom setting and through whole class teaching. Differentiated teaching strategies, flexible learning and group work are integral parts of the Revised Curriculum.

Curriculum Leaders should:

- Be aware of current legislation
- Keep up to date with information on the SEN Register
- Ensure new members of department are familiar with the SEN Policy

- Ensure that practice and procedures within the department promote learning and teaching which is relevant and accessible to all pupils
- Support subject teachers to enable them to provide an appropriate and differentiated curriculum
- Ensure appropriate resources are available
- Discuss issues with subject teachers through departmental meetings and forward minutes to SENCo when appropriate

The Head of Year should:

- Be aware of current legislation.
- Keep up to date with the SEN Register.
- Liaise with other staff regarding pupils who are experiencing difficulty.
- Work closely with the SENCO/Head of Learning Support Centre (LSC).
- Update records as appropriate.

Teachers should:

- Keep up to date with information on the SEN Register.
- Inform Curriculum Leader, Head of Year and SENCo of any concerns they have about a pupil.
- Gather information for a trawl through observation and assessment when requested.
- Develop an inclusive classroom.
- Contribute to, manage and review IEPs in consultation with the SENCO.
- Incorporate strategies to help support pupils reach IEP targets.
- Work closely with and involve classroom assistants in planning for effective support of pupils in their class.

Classroom Assistants should:

- Work in partnership with and under the direction of the class teacher.
- Be involved in planning.
- Look for positives when dealing with the pupil.
- Provide practical support.
- Listen to the pupil and pass on any concerns to the class teacher.
- Speak to staff on the child's behalf, when necessary.
- Remind pupil of classroom and school procedures boundaries and support the pupil in following these consistently.
- Keep records and attend meetings.
- Assist with invigilation of revision sessions and examinations/ subject/topic tests.
- Share good practice.

In line with appropriate departmental policies, all staff are responsible for the monitoring of pupil progress and where a persistent area of difficulty is highlighted for a pupil (e.g. organisation, spelling, behaviour etc.) information is passed to the SENCO.

All staff are advised annually of their roles with regard to Special Educational Needs provision and they are provided with a detailed Special Educational Needs Register and strategies to assist Special Educational Needs pupils. Staff are also encouraged to seek advice and guidance from the SENCO regarding any aspect of Special Educational Needs.

Pupils

‘The child should, where possible, according to age maturity and capability, participate in all the decision making processes which occur in education.’

(Supplement to the Code of Practice – pars 1.19)

Key decisions for a particular pupil might include:

- Contributing to the assessment
- Contributing to education plans through setting targets
- Working towards achieving agreed targets and
- Contributing to the review of EPs, Annual Reviews and the Transition process

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS/ CARERS

‘The relationship between the parents of a child with SEN and their child’s school has a crucial bearing on the child’s educational progress and effectiveness of any school based action. Professional help can seldom be wholly effective unless it builds upon parental involvement and provides reassurance that account is taken of what parents say and that their views and anxieties are treated as intrinsically important.’(Code of Practice 2.21)

It is essential that parents inform the relevant school staff of any significant needs their child may possess. They should do this as early as possible. For example, important information may need to be made available by a parent upon a child’s entry to the school.

It is the school’s responsibility to inform parents when staff are considering placing the pupil’s name on the SEN register or moving the child to a higher or lesser stage of need. Parents should be invited as necessary to:

- Meet with staff to discuss their child’s needs
- Attend review meetings
- Inform staff of changes in circumstances
- Support targets on EPs

The involvement of parents is sought at an early stage in the identification, intervention, assessment and provision for Special Educational Needs. The first point of contact for parents is the SENCO. Parents and carers have the opportunity to discuss issues, concerns or needs with the SENCo during formal occasions including Open Evening in January, Intake Evening in June and Year 8 Information Evening in October and at any other time during the school term by telephoning, writing or e-mailing their queries or concerns to the SENCo. Parents whose child has been on the SEN Register prior to moving on to secondary school are invited to a meeting with the SENCo in their first term to discuss their child's strengths and weaknesses and to help draw up and implement the targets in the Individual Education Plan.

The information provided by parents and carers is valued as a very useful contribution to the process of identifying the pupil's needs and how best they can be met within the school context.

PARTNERSHIP WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Links between the SENCo and certain outside agencies and support services include:

- Social Services
- School Psychology Service (EA, SR)
- Special Educational Needs Advisors (EA, SR)

- Sensory Support Service (EA,SR)
- Health Trust (Southern or Northern)
- Clinical Medical Officer
- Learning Support Staff
- The Cookstown & Dungannon Area Learning Community
- ASD support service
- Behaviour Support Service
- CAMHS
- JCQ and Examination Boards (consultation over access arrangements and special consideration)
- Language & Communication (MAST)
- Occupational Therapy service
- Specific Literacy Difficulties service(SPLD)
- SOFT programme services

INSERVICE TRAINING

Cookstown High School acknowledges its responsibility to provide necessary and appropriate training for all and particular staff members. On an annual basis, members of the Senior Leadership Team review training and development in relation to the needs of Special Educational Needs pupils in School.

ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

SEN provision includes:

- Employment of Classroom Assistants.
- Purchase of diagnostic tests/learning packages.
- Production of learning materials.
- Photocopying costs.
- Adaptations to building e.g. wheelchair access.
- Provision of a 'Chill Out room'.
- Designated SENCo office and meeting facilities.

EXAMINATIONS

In line with the external Examination Boards' policy concerning Examination Access, a number of arrangements are available, based on evidence of a history of need and evidence that this is the candidate's normal way of working, along with specific standardized scores on relevant tests conducted by a qualified tester in school. Form 8 must be completed, with evidence of need and testing no earlier than Year 10, School provides additional time and/or a reader during internal examinations for those pupils who qualify for this arrangement. Other special provision may include:

- Use of a computer/laptop
- Amanuensis
- Enlarged script
- Alternative venue
- Prompter
- Use of Read Write software
- Modified language papers

Otherwise, all pupils are expected to complete the same home and class study.

It is crucial that any pupil who may require special arrangements be identified as early in possible in school and substantial evidence of a picture of need and normal way of working be available. There is a deadline issued by the Examination Board for applications for Examination Access to be received well in advance of the commencement of the external examinations. In the large majority of cases, pupils will have been identified by teaching staff well in advance of commencing their GCSE course, a trawl will be completed, a questionnaire completed by parents, tests administered to the pupil (if required) and a substantial body of

evidence collected to prove that this is the candidate's normal way of working and that there is a history of need, all of which should be recorded on Form 8 of the JCQ documentation and made available for inspection by the visiting External Examinations Inspector when requested. Information about Access Arrangements and Special Consideration is supplied to all pupils and parents at the commencement of Study Leave and inquiries regarding Special Consideration are directed to the Senior Teacher (Pupil Achievement).

RECORD KEEPING

The SENCo keeps records in relation to a number of areas, including:

- SEN Register
- Records of Concern
- Education plans/Reviews
- Statements/Annual Reviews/Transition Plans
- Assessment results/data
- Individual Pupil Files
- Record of liaison/meetings with Board/Health Services
- Record of meetings with parents
- Staff Support, Advice and Training Records

Monitoring the Progress of Pupils with SENs

It is the responsibility of the SENCo to ensure that the progress of pupils on the SEN register is monitored.

- IEPs are monitored for quality, progression and appropriateness to identify evidence that the pupil is making progress.
- Information on the progress of pupils with SEN is gathered through IEP outcomes and liaison between Heads of Year and SENCo regarding examination and tracker results, and are used to inform future planning and inform movement either up or down through the Code of Practice Stages.

Professional Development

In terms of SEN training, the Headmaster oversees the professional development of all staff in this school in consultation with the SENCo. The SENCo keeps a record of all training relating to SEN.

All staff are expected to keep up-to-date with developments in the whole area of SEN in order to provide effectively for pupils.

REVIEW

The content of the Policy will be reviewed each year in the light of its appropriateness to provide for the special needs of Cookstown High School pupils and to meet legislative requirements.

The Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service

The Dispute Avoidance & Resolution Service (DARS) came into effect on 1 September 2005 as part of the implementation of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (SENDO). Disagreements may arise between a parent/guardian and either a school or Education Authority in relation to the special educational provision being made for a child or young person. If initial attempts to resolve the disagreements have not been successful, it may be appropriate to make a referral to the DARS **at the following address:**

DARS - SELB AREA
3 Charlemont Place, The Mall,
Armagh BT61 9AX

Tel. 028 3751 2383 / 028 3751 2224

Fax. 028 3751 2599

Email: DARS.enquiry@selb.org

References

The Education Support for Northern Ireland web site provides useful guidance on Special Educational Needs.

The link is:

<http://www.education-support.org.uk/parents/special-education/>

Appendix 1

Procedures followed as set out in the Code of Practice

A five-staged approach is used in identifying and dealing with a child's special needs. Stages 1 and 2 are carried out by the child's school and parents should be kept informed of what is happening. At stage 3 the school may request outside help, e.g. from an educational psychologist. Statutory assessment is the focus of stage 4. This is where the involvement of the Special Education Section begins. The different stages are outlined below.

School Based Stages

Stage 1

In school, the class teacher(s) notes any concerns about a child's learning and takes appropriate action and intervention in consultation with the child's parents. Throughout the assessment process, parents have an important part to play. The special needs co-ordinator and principal should be informed of the teachers' concerns. The child will be placed on the school's register of special educational needs. The child's name will be removed from the register when there is no longer a need or concern.

Stage 2

If action taken at stage 1 does not remedy the situation, the teacher in the school with responsibility for (SENCO) special needs becomes further involved. An IEP should be drawn up for the child and the child's progress monitored regularly. The school may retain the pupil at stage 2 or move on to stage 3 if the problem persists or has a greater impact on the child's learning. Following the outcome of the monitoring process, the child may also revert to stage 1 or no longer needs special help and is removed from the register.

Stage 3

Specialist help or advice from outside the school is requested e.g. educational psychologist and the IEP amended. The school may retain the pupil at stage 3 if the problem persists or after following further consultations, parents and the professionals involved may ask the EA to make a statutory assessment. Following the outcome of the monitoring process, the child may also revert to stage 2.

EA Based Stages

Stage 4

Statutory assessment is the focus of stage 4. The EA, in co-operation with the child's school, parents and any other appropriate agencies will decide if this is necessary, and if so will conduct the assessment. Statutory assessment will not always lead to a statement.

The EA will request written advice on the child from the:

- school
- medical officer
- educational psychologist
- and any other relevant agency

Parents are also invited to make a submission. Following the receipt of all the information the EA must decide whether to draw up a statement.

Stage 5

The issuing of a statement involves the EA either in making additional resources available to a mainstream school or indicating that a change of placement may be necessary for the child.