

Special Education Needs Census

Guidance Document

September 2023

Overview

This guidance and descriptions aim to provide support to schools in Lincolnshire in recording pupils' needs in the Schools Census.

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Introduction:

In order to help planning and development we need accurate information about the current profile of pupils in Lincolnshire with different types of special educational needs. This guidance and descriptions aim to provide support to schools in Lincolnshire in recording pupils' needs in the Schools Census by clarifying each term so that categorisation of need, using these specific terms, is consistent across settings.

The submission of a Schools Census return is a statutory requirement under section 537A of the Education Act 1996. This return should be authorised by the head teacher before being sent to Lincolnshire Local Authority (LA).

Since January 2004 the Department for Education (DfE) has collected information about the numbers of pupils in the country with different types of special educational need (SEN) as part of the schools' census. The data is used to help with planning, to study trends and to monitor the outcomes of initiatives and interventions for pupils with different types of SEN both nationally and locally within Lincolnshire.

The categorising of the needs of pupils relates to their provision needs. Therefore it is expected that, over time and depending on the effectiveness of the provision and the overall circumstances of the pupil, some needs will change. This document will clarify what to record and how to decide.

Early Years Census: Guidance about the Information you need to send

As well as Early Years only settings, there are over 80 schools and academies with an Early Years provision under their governance. These settings will be completing the Early Years census. Different information is provided by Early Years settings.

Individual child level data is required in the 2024 Early Years census for all funded 2, 3 and 4-year-olds.

The special educational needs and disability provision types are consistent with the SEND code of practice four categories of need [SEND code of practice](#).

Find an [SEN provision code](#).

Code	Description
N	No special educational need
E	Education, health and care plan
K	SEN support

Areas of need:

The main areas of special educational need or disability are set out in Chapter 6 of the SEN Code of Practice 2015. They are Cognition and Learning; Social, Emotional and Mental Health; Communication and Interaction; Sensory and/or Physical Needs. To give more detailed information these broad areas of have been sub-divided some of the broad areas into the categories. These are:

A	Cognition and Learning needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specific learning Difficulty (SpLD)• Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD)• Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD)• Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)
B	Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulty (SEMH)
C	Communication and Interaction needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)• Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
D	Sensory and/or Physical needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visual Impairment (VI)• Hearing Impairment (HI)• Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)• Physical Disability (PD)

There is also a category of **Other (OTH)** which only applies to *SEN Support* where there is no clearly identified special educational need or disability.

No Specialist Assessment (NSA)

Schools are expected to identify a type of need for all children at SEN Support - there is no requirement for a pupil to have a specialist assessment to be recorded in the main SEN types. The No Specialist Assessment code ('NSA') should only be used in those very rare instances where a pupil is placed on SEN support (Code 'K'), but the school is still assessing what the primary need is. This might occur, for example, where a child on SEN support has transferred into the school shortly before school census day. Where code 'NSA' is to be used, the pupil MUST have SEN Provision of code 'K'. Code 'NSA' must not be used without the pupil having an appropriate SEN provision in place.'

Who to record?

➤ **N – no special educational need (SEN)**

All pupils without SEN must be recorded as **N** – no special education need or disability.

➤ **SEN**

Pupils that receive educational provision which is additional to or different from the educational provision made generally for children of their age as part of a graduated approach (see *SEND Code of Practice: Chapter 6*). This means it will be pupils classed as either SEN Support or will have a current statutory assessment taking place. The purpose of areas of need is not to apply a static label to the pupil, but to profile their current assessed need for provision.

Children and young people may be identified as having SEN with or without diagnosis, however, there should be clear evidence of needing

the additional support available, e.g. test results, notes from conversations with parents, etc.

➤ **Type of SEN**

You should record the type/s of need for pupils where special educational provision is being made at *SEN Support* or through an Educational Health and Care (EHC) plan. For children with an EHC plan this should be the same as the need recorded on page 3 of their EHC plan where recorded as *Broad Area of Need / Primary Need*.

Please remember that:

- Under-attainment may be an indicator of SEN but poor performance may be due to other factors such as problems in the child's home or family circumstances or poor attendance (see *SEND Code of Practice: Chapter 6 6.21-6.23*)
- Difficulties related solely to limitations in English as an additional language are not SEN. Identifying and assessing SEN for pupils whose first language is not English requires particular care. Schools should look carefully at all aspects of performance to establish whether lack of progress is due to limitations in their command of English or if it arises from SEN or a disability.
- A pupil with a medical diagnosis or disability does not have a special educational need, unless special educational provision is needed to access the curriculum. Individual healthcare plans should be in place to meet the medical needs of such pupils. Where children and young people also have SEN, their provision should be planned and delivered in a coordinated way with the healthcare plan.

Therefore **do not** record pupils where English is not their first language or those with a medical diagnosis or disability unless they also have an identified special educational need. Remember, the special educational need should be recorded as the primary or only need.

How to decide?

We are aware that many pupils have more than one type of difficulty that are frequently, but not always, inter-related. Therefore you should record information on pupils' greatest or primary need and, where appropriate, their secondary need.

When the pupil has an EHC plan their needs will have been formally assessed; these will be summarised on page 3 where recorded as Broad Area of Need / Primary Need and then detailed in Section B of their EHC plan. The type/s of need recorded in the census must reflect page 3 of the EHC plan. Where a child's primary need changes, this information in their EHC plan should be updated via the annual review process. **For pupils with an EHC plan the category Other (OTH) must not be used.** If you are unclear how to record a pupil's needs that has an EHC plan please contact the pupil's SEND Caseworker with the SEND team. Their details can be found on all correspondence relating to the pupil or you can contact:

SEND Business Support: BS_SEND@lincolnshire.gov.uk

01522 553332

Some pupils whose needs are being met at *SEN Support* will also have had assessments by others such as Educational Psychology, Specialist Teaching Team, Working Together Team and Behaviour Outreach Support Service (BOSS). Information and advice from external support services will help you to decide which SEN to record.

The short descriptions that follow are intended to help you to decide which types of SEN are the most appropriate to record. If they are not sufficient to help you to decide we recommend that you contact an educationalist such as an Educational Psychologist or the Specialist Teaching Team.

Where a diagnosis exists this will not necessarily determine the primary or additional needs of the pupil as the recording of the needs identifies the current required profile of support that is additional educational provision to help the pupil access the curriculum.

MLD, SLD and PMLD need to have a comprehensive cognitive battery by an Educational Psychologist or a Specialist Teacher, holding an appropriate post-graduate qualification. In addition SLD and PMLD need developmental assessments by an Educational Psychologist. Without a comprehensive Cognition and Learning assessment, a GP or Community Paediatrician cannot diagnose this level of learning difficulty.

Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)

ADHD has features relating to both mental health and specific learning difficulties. It frequently results in learning challenges for the individuals concerned, with a measurable impact on educational and occupational outcomes. Given its impact on learning and education, ADHD can be conceptualised as a specific learning difficulty. However, learning difficulties reflect only one aspect of ADHD, which include a wider range of psychosocial (e.g. occupational failure, behavioural problems, driving accidents) and mental health problems (e.g. sleep difficulties, low self-esteem, emotional instability, development of comorbid anxiety/depression). ADHD can be a primary need

within either category of Cognition and Learning or Social, Emotional, and Mental Health, depending on the presentation of the child.

A Cognition and Learning needs:

- Specific learning Difficulty (SpLD)

Pupils with specific learning difficulties have a particular difficulty in learning to read, write, spell or manipulate numbers so that their performance in these areas is below their performance in other areas. Pupils may also have problems with short-term memory, with organisational skills and with co-ordination. Pupils with specific learning difficulties cover the whole ability range and the severity of their impairment varies widely.

Children and young people identified as having Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD), will have severe and persistent difficulties in a specific area of learning despite high quality teaching and evidence-based intervention over time.

Specific learning difficulties include:

Dyslexia

Pupils with dyslexia may learn readily in some areas of the curriculum, but have a marked and persistent difficulty in acquiring accuracy or fluency in learning to read, write and spell. Pupils may have poor reading comprehension, handwriting and punctuation. They may also have difficulties in concentration and organisation and in remembering

sequences of words. They may mispronounce common words or reverse letters and sounds in words.

Dyscalculia

Pupils with dyscalculia have difficulty in acquiring mathematical skills. Pupils may have difficulty understanding simple number concepts, lack an intuitive grasp of numbers and have problems learning number facts and procedures.

Dyspraxia

Also known as Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD).

Pupils with dyspraxia are affected by an impairment of immaturity of the organisation of movement, often appearing clumsy. Gross and fine motor skills are hard to learn and difficult to retain and generalize. Pupils may have poor balance and co-ordination and may be hesitant in many actions (running, skipping, hopping, holding a pencil, doing jigsaws, etc.). Their articulation may also be immature and their language late to develop. They may also have poor awareness of body position.

- **Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD)**

The majority of pupils with learning difficulties will be identified early in their school career. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties will have attainments significantly below expected levels in all core areas of the curriculum, despite appropriate interventions (for example 3-4 years below in Years 5 upwards). Their needs will not be able to be met by normal differentiation and the flexibilities of the curriculum.

Pupils with moderate learning difficulties have much greater difficulty than their peers in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills and in understanding concepts. They may also have associated speech and

language delay, low self-esteem, low levels of concentration and under-developed social skills.

Pupils with moderate learning difficulties require a differentiated curriculum and a multi-sensory approach to their learning. With tailored learning opportunities, the majority of pupils with MLD make good progress in mainstream schools.

- **Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD)**

Pupils with severe learning difficulties have significant intellectual or cognitive impairments. This has a major effect on their ability to participate in the school curriculum without support. They may also have associated difficulties in mobility and co-ordination, communication and perception and the acquisition of self-help skills. Pupils with severe learning difficulties will need support in all areas of the curriculum. They may also require teaching of self-help, independence and social skills. Some pupils may use sign and symbols, but most will be able to hold simple conversations and gain some literacy skills. They may be working towards pre Key Stage 1 levels. The child or young person will still be engaged in subject specific study in line with the Pre-Key Stage standards.

- **Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)**

Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have complex learning needs. In addition pupils have other significant difficulties including physical disabilities, sensory impairment. Pupils require a high level of adult support, both for their learning needs and also for personal care. They are likely to need sensory stimulation and a curriculum broken down into very small steps. Some pupils communicate by

gesture, eye pointing or symbols, others by very simple language. They are unlikely to be engaged in subject specific study and will have their progress measured within the Engagement Model.

B Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties:

- Social, Emotional & Mental Health difficulty (SEMH)

Pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties cover the full range of ability and a continuum of severity. If the only additional provision is routine medicine pupils should not be recorded as SEMH.

Pupils with autism can experience high levels of stress and anxiety or may use their behaviour to communicate. Unless an agency has completed an assessment that identifies the primary need as SEMH then these pupils should have their primary need recorded as Autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Schools should have clear processes and policies in place to support pupils that take into account any reasonable adjustments. It is also important for settings to use Lincolnshire SEND Inclusion Toolkit to support a clear definition and shared understanding that is easily understandable so that staff, pupils, students and parents can have discussions and plan interventions to meet SEMH needs.

C Communication and Interaction needs:

- Speech, Language & Communication Needs (SLCN)

Pupils with speech, language and communication needs cover the whole ability range. Pupils with speech, language and communication needs may have difficulty in understanding and/or making others understand information conveyed through spoken language. Their acquisition of speech and their oral language skills may be significantly behind their peers. Their speech may be poor or unintelligible.

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

Pupils whose first language is not English should only be recorded as SLCN if they also have a special educational need in this area which has been identified using an assessment tool or specialist.

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Pupils with autism cover the full range of ability and the severity of the impact of their autism on their learning varies. This will have been

identified by a Community Paediatrician or other medical doctor. Some pupils also have learning disabilities or other special educational needs.

D Sensory and/or Physical needs:

- Visual Impairment (VI)

Visual impairment refers to a range of difficulties from partial sight through to blindness. Pupils with visual impairments cover the whole ability range. For educational purposes, a pupil is considered to be visually impaired if they require adaptations to their environment or specific differentiation of learning materials in order to access the curriculum.

Pupils whose vision is corrected by spectacles should **not** be recorded as having a VI.

- Hearing Impairment (HI)

Pupils with a hearing impairment range from those with a mild hearing loss to those who are profoundly deaf. They cover the whole ability range. For educational purposes, pupils are regarded as having a hearing impairment if they require hearing aids, adaptations to their environment and/or particular teaching strategies in order to access the concepts and language of the curriculum.

- Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)

Pupils should only be recorded as MSI if their sensory impairment is their greatest need.

Pupils with multi-sensory impairment have a combination of visual and hearing difficulties. They are sometimes referred to as deaf blind, but may have some residual sight and/or hearing. Many also have additional disabilities, but their complex needs mean that it may be difficult to ascertain their intellectual abilities.

- Physical Disability (PD)

There is a wide range of physical disabilities and pupils cover the whole ability range. Some pupils are able to access the curriculum and learn effectively without additional educational provision. They have a disability, but do not have a special educational need.

There are a number of medical conditions associated with physical disability which can impact on mobility. These include cerebral palsy, spina bifida, hydrocephalus and muscular dystrophy. Pupils with physical disabilities may also have associated sensory impairments, neurological problems or learning difficulties.

Other

Other (OTH)

This category **must not** be used when the pupil has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. If, after looking at page 3 of the pupil's EHC plan or Section B you are unclear how to record the pupil's type/s of need please contact the pupil's SEND Caseworker with the SEND team. Their details can be found on all correspondence relating to the pupil or you can contact:

SEND Business Support: BS_SEND@lincolnshire.gov.uk

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This category can **only** be used for pupils at *SEN Support* for very unusual special educational needs that are substantially different from any of the types of needs described.

With ongoing assessment as part of the graduated approach and the assess, plan, do, review cycles that should be taking place it is expected that schools should very rarely have to use this category. It must also only be used temporarily (maximum of a 12 month period) as robust assessment should take place to identify the primary need in a timely way.

References and useful links:

[Local Offer](#)

[Inclusion Toolkit](#)

[VSEND](#)

[SEND Code of Practice 2015](#)

[DfE Data Collection by Type of Educational Need](#)

SEND Business Support: BS_SEND@lincolnshire.gov.uk
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Liaise (SEND information, advice and support service):
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