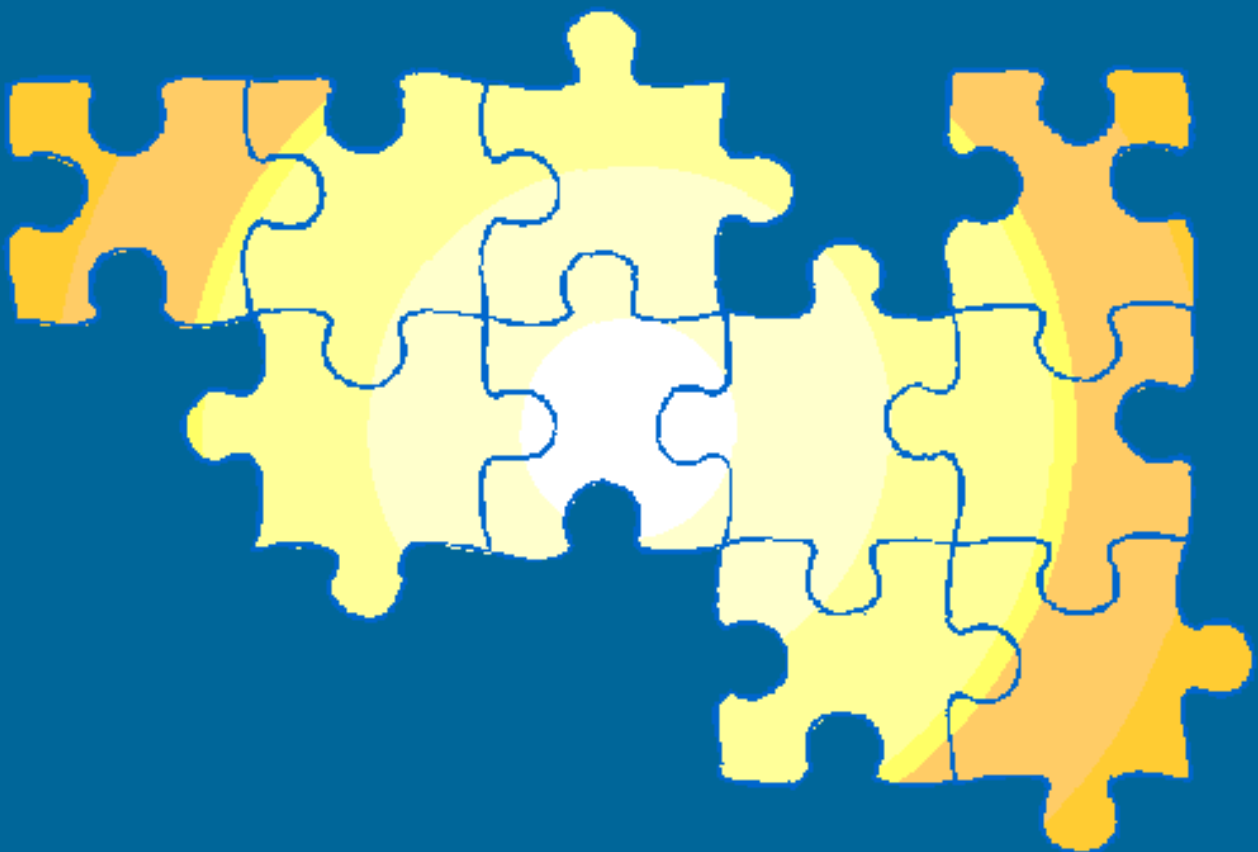


## Special Educational Needs in Gateshead

# A Graduated Response: Early Years Action and Early Years Action Plus School Action and School Action Plus



# A Graduated Response: Early Years Action and Early Years Action Plus School Action and School Action Plus

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# A Graduated Response: Early Years Action and Early Years Action Plus Schools Action and School Action Plus

## Introduction

The Code of Practice sets out guidance on the identification of, assessment of and provision for pupils with special educational needs. It provides a model of early intervention and action to help pupils towards independent learning. It advocates a graduated, three level response to intervention with procedures at Early Years/School Action or Early Years/ School Action Plus, and statutory assessment and provision.

## Initial concern

A concern that a child may have a learning difficulty or special need will be recognised by those closely involved. These initial concerns act as a warning that action needs to be taken, mainly in reviewing the level of differentiation in curriculum planning.

Once a teacher or an early years practitioner identifies that a child has a special educational need, discussion will need to take place with the SENCO. Parents should be informed at an early stage and the school should recognise that the knowledge and views of parents are valuable in supporting planning and allowing them to take responsibility for their child's needs and learning.

The SENCO will need to register the concern and may need to offer advice. Information, including information about any agency or service involvement with the child, will need to be collated.

## Helping children make progress

Meeting the needs of all children is normally achieved through the teacher's knowledge of each child's strengths, skills and abilities, and the teacher's own ability to provide each child with appropriate access to the curriculum. If it is considered that the child needs help beyond that which is normally available through normal class or subject differentiation, consideration should be given to placing the child at Early Years/School Action.

## Early Years/School Action

### Description

Early Years/School Action is characterised by interventions that are **additional** to, or **different from**, those normally provided as part of the school's differentiated curriculum and teaching strategies.

The interventions are school-based and arranged through the school's resources. The class teacher will need to evaluate the current learning strategies and consult with the SENCO to consider further action.

## What should the class teacher and SENCO consider at this point?

- Progress towards the early learning goals with particular reference to communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, personal, social and emotional development and physical development
- monitoring through observation and assessment
- baseline assessment results
- P-scale levels
- progress in literacy and numeracy
- performance against National Curriculum level descriptions
- standardised tests or assessment results.

## What action should be taken?

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) should be drawn up at Early Years/School Action. The IEP should only include actions that are additional to or different from the normally differentiated curriculum plan. The IEP should be developed in consultation with parents and children.

At this level, options for action include:

- Use of extra or different learning materials.
- A systematic, small steps programme to address areas of weakness.
- Use of special equipment, which could include priority access to ICT.
- Additional support in a group or individually, in class or withdrawn
- A home learning programme agreed with parents.
- Extra time allocated to SENCO, class teacher and adult support for curriculum planning
- Staff development and training to raise staff confidence and help produce more effective strategies

- Occasional access to LEA services for advice/consultation.

## Who is responsible for what at Early Years/School Action?

- The SENCO and other relevant staff, such as the class or subject teachers, the Literacy and Numeracy Co-ordinators and the pastoral or subject heads, should consider various teaching approaches, equipment and teaching strategies, including the use of ICT.
- The class teacher, SENCO or other member of staff may be given the responsibility for drafting the IEP, dependent on the school policy.
- The SENCO should ensure the new IEP clearly sets out the new targets together with the actions and strategies agreed.
- The SENCO should ensure that the views of children and parents are taken into account although another member of staff will often have the responsibility for obtaining the views.
- The class or subject teacher is responsible for the delivery of the interventions recorded in the IEP
- If parents are unable to attend a review meeting, the SENCO should ensure they are informed about the content of the IEP and the ways in which they can support their child.

## Reviewing a child's progress at Early Years Action or School Action

Reviews should take place at least twice a year. Reviewing progress gives the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of all the actions taken and the provision made and to gather the views of parents and children.

The review should consider:

- Views of the parent and child.
- Progress made by the child in relation to the targets set in the IEP.
- The child's achievements in other areas.
- The effectiveness of actions taken.
- Information that needs to be updated in the child's records.
- Next steps/action.
- Date of next review.

A key part of the review is to consider each of the targets in the IEP and to decide whether or not they have been met. The level achieved should be recorded on the outcome column of the IEP while any discussion about the pupil's progress on each target should be recorded on the IEP Review form.

The main options for action to be decided by the review are:

- A return to normal classroom differentiation
- To continue at School Action
- A move to School Action Plus
- A request for statutory assessment. (Normally not before at least 2 IEPs have been implemented and reviewed at the Action Plus level.)

A child may remain at the Action level for the duration of several IEPs or just for one. However, a move to Early Years/School Action Plus should normally not be considered until the outcome of at least two IEPs is known.

If the pupil continues at Early Years/School Action, is moved to Early Years/School Action Plus or is the subject of a proposal for statutory assessment, a new or updated IEP must be produced.

## Early Years/School Action Plus

### Description

Early Years/School Action Plus is characterised by the need for a higher level of involvement and support. It is at this point that external services, both LEA-based and outside agencies, become involved. External specialists will be able to advise teachers on targets and strategies and provide materials and more specialist assessments to inform planning. In some cases they will be able to provide direct support.

### What could the triggers for Early Years/School Action Plus be?

The pupil:

- continues to make little or no progress in identified areas of difficulty;
- is working at National Curriculum levels substantially below what is expected;
- continues to have difficulty in acquiring basic skills in literacy and numeracy;
- has behaviour, emotional or social difficulties which are affecting their own learning or that of their class or group;
- has sensory or physical needs requiring specialist equipment, advice or support from an external service/agency;
- has continuing communication or interaction difficulties that prevent social relationships developing and act as barriers to learning

## What action should be taken?

An individual Education Plan (IEP) should be drawn up at Early Years/School Action Plus. The IEP should only include actions that are additional to or different from the normally differentiated curriculum plan. The IEP should be developed in consultation with parents and children and with the support and guidance of outside specialists. It should be informed by more detailed assessment than is appropriate at Early Years/School Action

At this level, options for action include:

- Some sessions of additional support in a group or individually, in class or withdrawn. The level of support should clearly be higher than is provided at Early Years/School Action.
- Detailed assessment, involving an external specialist, to inform planning.
- Use of extra or different learning materials.
- A systematic, small steps programme to address areas of weakness.
- Use of special equipment, which could include priority access to ICT.
- A home learning programme agreed with parents.
- Extra time allocated by SENCO, class teacher and adult support for curriculum planning.
- Staff development and training to raise staff confidence and help produce more effective strategies.
- Exceptionally, individual support provided by one of the LEA services or an external agency.
- Access to LEA services for advice/consultation.

## Who is responsible for what at Early Years/School Action Plus?

- The SENCO is responsible for liaising with external specialists and for making any necessary arrangements for assessment or intervention by those specialists.
- The SENCO normally has the responsibility for drafting the IEP, with the support of the external specialists and after consulting other relevant staff.
- The SENCO must ensure that the views of children and parents are taken into account in preparing the IEP.
- The SENCO must ensure the new IEP clearly sets out the new targets together with the actions and strategies agreed. The SENCO is then responsible for deploying school resources for SEN as required by the IEP.
- Where additional support is being provided by an external agency, the support is managed by the relevant specialist from that agency in consultation with the SENCO.
- The class or subject teacher is responsible for the delivery of classroom interventions recorded in the IEP.
- If parents are unable to attend a review meeting, the SENCO must ensure they are informed about the content of the IEP and the ways in which they can support their child.

## Reviewing a child's progress at Early Years Action Plus or School Action Plus

Reviews should take place at least twice a year and more frequently in the case of more severe behaviour difficulties.

A key part of the review is to consider each of the targets in the IEP and to decide whether or not they have been met. The level achieved should be recorded on the outcome column of the IEP while any discussion about the pupil's progress on each target should be recorded on the IEP Review form.

Reviews within Early Years/School Action Plus can follow the format outlined for Early Years/School Action, but in this case the next steps might be:

- A return to normal classroom differentiation.
- A return to Early Years/School Action.
- Continuing at Early Years/School Action Plus.
- A proposal for a Statutory Assessment.

If the pupil returns to School Action, remains at School Action Plus or is the subject of a proposal for statutory assessment, a new or updated IEP must be produced.

## Strands of action

### Introduction

The SEN Code of Practice identifies Strands of Action set within the following contexts:

- Assessment and planning.
- Teaching groups.
- Human resources.
- Curriculum and teaching.

Within each context the Strands of Action show an increasing intensity of interventions. We have summarised these to show how schools might use them to best meet the identified needs of pupils.

### Assessment and planning

Careful assessment of a pupil's difficulties is a necessary pre-requisite to deciding actions needed to help pupils to make progress. Increasing levels of special need should correlate with an increase in the types and intensity of interventions. Assessment and planning will include most of the following:

- Assessment by teachers and SENCO. Continuous assessment supplemented by Standard/Diagnostic test.
- IEP with 'SMART' targets<sup>1</sup>. Reviews on regular basis. Parental involvement, possibly in supporting targets.
- Specialist assessment by external support services to inform IEP.
- Parents directly involved in supporting targets at home.
- Contributions from outside specialists and other agencies .
- Longer-term plan supported by short-term IEPs.
- Parental involvement in long/short-term planning.

### Teaching groups

Outlined below are ways in which teachers can utilise grouping strategies to help pupils make greater progress. These could be used for particular activities or, as the interventions increase, on a regular basis.

- Classroom-based work.
- Flexible organisation of groups in the classroom.
- Provision for out-of-hours learning made for pupils, e.g. lunchtime/homework clubs.
- Most of pupils' time spent in classroom, being given support through flexible group strategies.

<sup>1</sup> **S**pecific; **M**anageable; **A**ssessable; **R**ealistic; **T**ime **S**pecific **T**argets

- Access to small group/individual tuition within the classroom.
- Limited withdrawal or out-of-hours provision provided in order to support IEPs.
- Pupils work mostly in small groups or individually withdrawn within the classroom. This might include out-of-hours provision.

### Human resources

The teacher is the main learning resource. Schools might examine the use of professional development to enable teachers to work more flexibly, thereby maximising the use of their skills. Learning Support Assistants can be used to assist teachers and, with appropriate supervision, so can parents and other adult helpers. An appropriate continuum of support might include the following:

1. Provision is mostly through SENCO involvement in assessment and planning. Pupil is supported on a routine ad-hoc basis with some adult support.
2. Provision mostly by class/subject teacher on a more systematic basis, guided by the SENCO.
3. Carefully targeted routine in-class support provided through LSA or other adult.
4. Support provided by specialist staff within the school according to the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP).
5. Specialist teachers or educational psychologists involved in giving advice on strategies.
6. LSA, specialist teacher and/or SENCO provide individual or small group tuition.
7. LSA or other adult provides regular, sustained targeted in-class support.

### Curriculum and teaching

An inclusive curriculum allows children with a variety of learning needs to make progress. However, it may be necessary for some children to be withdrawn for special help. Such withdrawal should be clearly supportive of the child's learning objectives and linked to the programme of work in class.

How children are grouped depends on the adopted teaching style and the pupil's learning style. The aim should be to minimise withdrawal and to reintroduce the pupil into the class as soon as possible.

Effective teaching of children with special educational needs is characterised by the following:

- Curriculum access is achieved through differentiation.
- Provision is made for targeted reinforcement or skill development linked to IEP targets.
- There is increased differentiation of activities and materials in proportion to need.
- Specific targets are supported through an individualised programme.
- Specialist equipment and access to ICT is provided to meet need.
- Provision is increasingly individualised but delivered through an inclusive curriculum.
- Specialist teaching and/or communication techniques may be employed, supported by appropriate equipment and material.

### Individual Education Plans

#### What is an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?

An Individual Education Plan is:

- A planning, teaching and reviewing device used to prepare interventions for individual pupils with SEN.

- A specification of what should be taught, how it should be taught and how often particular knowledge, understanding and skills should be visited through differentiated curricular activities that are additional to and different from those provided for all pupils.
- A structured planning tool detailing the steps and teaching requirements needed to enable the pupil to achieve specific targets.
- A working document which can be used by all teaching staff.
- A document preferably agreed on by parents and developed, wherever possible, with pupil involvement.
- An accessible document understood by all.
- Used to plan interventions for individual pupils through the Graduated Response to SEN:
  - Early Years Action/School Action.
  - Early Years Action Plus/School Action Plus.
  - Statements of Special Educational Need.

### What should an Individual Education Plan include?

A good quality Individual Education Plan should be succinct and should include the following:

- the short-term SMART targets set for or by the pupil;
  - **Specific**
  - **Measurable**
  - **Achievable**  
(for both the pupil and the teacher)
  - **Relevant**
  - **Timed**
- the teaching strategies to be used;
- the provision to be put in place;
- when the plan is to be reviewed;
- success and/or exit criteria; and,
- outcomes (to be recorded when the IEP is reviewed).

### In the very best Individual Education Plans:

- there is a clear overview of any concerns and of the nature of the child's difficulties;
- the learning difficulties are very clearly defined (e.g. poor short-term memory - can only follow one-stage instructions);
- there will be a clear role for the parents in ensuring their child achieves his or her objectives;
- the learning objectives are crisply written, measurable and timed;
- the class or subject teacher has ownership of the plan and targets are incorporated into the general planning process;
- the focus is on up to three or four key targets;
- targets relate to the key areas of communication, literacy and mathematics or to aspects of behaviour or physical skills; and
- targets are underpinned by a clear understanding of the pupil's strengths and successes.

### What is meant by adequate progress

For an Individual Education Plan, adequate progress means progress that results in the achievement of the targets set, so long as those targets are relevant to the child's needs and appropriately challenging. It will, therefore, mean very different levels of achievement for different children.

Similarly, in the longer term, adequate progress might reflect a range of different levels of achievement. For example it might include one or more of the following:

- Closing the attainment gap between the pupil and his/her peers.
- Preventing the attainment gap growing wider.

- For some pupils with specific degenerative disabilities, may be the slowing down of regression.
  - Progress similar to that of peers starting from the same attainment baseline, even if less than the majority of peers.
  - Measured progress directly in terms of what the pupil knows, understands and can do.
  - Matching or bettering the pupil's previous rate of progress.
  - Enabling full access to the curriculum.
  - Improvement in self-help, social or personal skills.
  - Improvement in the pupil's behaviour.
  - Progression to appropriate accreditation.
  - Enabling participation in further education, training and/or employment.
- the teacher records the time spent working with pupils with SEN;
  - the IEPs are capable of being achieved;
  - staff working with the pupil share ownership of the targets, with the SENCO co-ordinating liaison between the participants;
  - staff understand and accept that the SENCO is not solely responsible for devising and delivering the IEP, but is responsible for co-ordinating its planning;
  - there are effective procedures to communicate IEP information to new staff, new schools following the child's transfer and relevant external agencies;
  - when an external specialist assists with IEP development, implementation takes place, as far as possible, in the normal classroom setting; and,
  - all teachers understand the way in which IEPs relate to Literacy and Numeracy Action Plans and the School Improvement Plan as a whole.

### **Management of Individual Education Plans**

If Individual Education Plans are to be managed effectively, it is important that:

- procedures are in place to ensure IEPs do not make unmanageable demands on the class teacher;
- the time allocated for delivery of the IEP is realistic and integrated into curriculum planning;

### **School self review: Individual Education Plans**

Schools could use this checklist as a basis for taking a sample of Individual Education Plans and reviewing their quality and effectiveness across phases and within School Action and School Action Plus (see next page).

## Using ICT

### Using ICT to support the delivery of IEPs

Reference to the use of ICT to assist children with special educational needs to progress is made repeatedly within the SEN Code of Practice. ICT can make a significant difference, but for this to happen it is important that:

- the SENCO and ICT Co-ordinator are aware of the potential for ICT in meeting a wide range of SEN;
- classroom assistants are trained in the use of specific software;
- the class teacher/subject teacher are aware of how specific software, equipment and devices can be used to support curriculum access;
- strategies are put in place to make pupils more confident with the use of ICT;
- the SENCO gives advice to the class teacher/subject teacher on the most effective use of the school's ICT resources; and,
- the school is able to contact the LEA Support Services for advice on the most appropriate specialist resources to meet specific needs.

### Using ICT to support the management of IEPs

*Head teachers and Governors should support the SENCO in the use of Information and Communications Technology for SEN management systems and for preparing and recording Individual Education Plans*

*(SEN Code of Practice 5:36, 6:39).*

The LEA encourages schools to use the recommended formats for IEPs which are included in this Handbook (see Appendix 2).

There are also other examples of good ICT Management Systems that can help to make the development, implementation, review and monitoring of Individual Education Plans more manageable.

For example:

IEP Writer

[www.learnhowpublications.co.uk](http://www.learnhowpublications.co.uk)

Sherston Software

[www.info@sherston.co.uk](mailto:www.info@sherston.co.uk)

IEP Developer

[www.specialrit-solutions.co.uk](http://www.specialrit-solutions.co.uk)

Before you make a decision on the implementation of an ICT Management System, you should check the following:-

- Does the system link with existing systems in the school?
- Does the software work on machines which are readily accessible to the SENCO?
- Is training available in the use of the software?
- Does the software provide exemplar IEPs?
- Is it easy to use?
- Does the system fully reflect the requirements of the SEN Code of Practice?
- Can the format of the IEP be changed to match LEA requirements?
- Are help-lines available?