



**BARNSLEY**  
Metropolitan Borough Council

**Guidance for the  
Identification and Provision  
for Nursery Education Funded  
Children with Special  
Educational Needs**

**S2-1**

## Background

The BMBC SEN Strategy has been developed in response to the changing national picture. Consultation has taken place with Early Years practitioners, Early Years managers, networked childminders, SENCOs, practitioners, parent/carer representatives and local authority officers. Details of the overall group's work can be accessed through Barnsley Council's website:

<http://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/education-learning-and-childcare/schools-and-colleges/special-educational-needs-placements-in-mainstream-schools/>

The work has been undertaken within the national and local context of:

- the Government's Strategy on SEN, 'Removing Barriers to Achievement';
- the Green Paper: Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability
- School Funding Reform: Next steps towards a fairer system;
- BMBC's Inclusion Strategy;
- the changes, from April 2013, in funding settings for NEF children with special educational needs; and
- the wider range of child performance data to which settings have access to.

One of the priorities in developing the SEN Strategy has been to establish Guidance for the Identification and Provision for Nursery Education Funded (NEF) Children with Special Educational Needs.

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council has continued to review the previous 'SEN Criteria' in the light of comments from settings and the changing national picture. Both formal meetings and informal discussions with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council officers, parent/carer representatives, educational settings and SENCOs have taken place. (A sincere thank you to all those involved.)

A Working Group consisting of representatives from Integrated Inclusion Services, Early Childhood Services, Buddies Children's Centre, Busy Bees (Penistone) and King's Oak Children's Centre have refined the Guidance documents. Many thanks for their expertise, advice and support.

The following principles were applied:

- 1 The procedures must meet the requirements of the new SEN Code of Practice (draft form published Spring 2013).
- 2 The guidance should reflect the best practice locally and nationally.
- 3 The guidance should be consistent with the target setting process for educational settings.
- 4 The documentation should be the minimum necessary to support effective provision.

## The Process

- 1 All practitioners plan, prepare, deliver and evaluate differentiated learning opportunities. They monitor the progress of all NEF children and use observational assessments to inform practice. Where a child is failing to make progress, the practitioner should consider different and additional strategies and notify the parent/carer at the earliest opportunity. Consultation with the child and parent/carer is paramount to guiding a more personalised pathway.

- 2 An assessment of the child's current level of functioning is undertaken. This should include Development Matters of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum or more specific assessments including Early Support Developmental Journals. It should also include information on attendance, behaviour, vision, hearing, other medical information and any changes in personal circumstances that may cause barriers to a child's learning.
- 3 In a small number of cases, it is important to consider if there is an undiagnosed medical condition contributing to the special educational need. In particular, where a sudden change in learning behaviour is not explained by 'social circumstances' or where there is an unexplained continuing deterioration over time. Parents/carers should then seek medical advice. Parents and carers may need support from the setting to seek this advice.
- 4 This information should be checked against Barnsley's Equality and Diversity Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and other relevant policies of the setting. The setting's SEN policy needs to have taken account of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council's SEN Handbook and the requirements of the SEN Code of Practice and Toolkit (2001).
- 5 If the decision is that the child has special educational needs, then that must be recorded and fully discussed with the child (if appropriate) and parent/carer ensuring that the parent/carer is confident that the actions are appropriate for addressing their child's needs.
- 6 In the majority of cases, the identified NEF children will be placed at Early Years Action and this will be discussed with parents/carers. Where necessary, an Individual Education Plan<sup>1</sup> (IEP) will be written contemporaneously and parents/carers will be part of writing its contents (as soon as possible after the discussion) ensuring that parents/carers have confidence that the educational setting is quickly responding to reducing the barriers to learning. If an IEP is not necessary progress should still be monitored closely and shared with parents/carers.
- 7 If an IEP is being used it should only specify additional and different provision and should have:
  - a. Short term targets (no more than 3 or 4 targets)
  - b. Teaching strategies
  - c. Details of the provision
  - d. A review date
  - e. Success criteria
  - f. Outcomes recorded at the review(The SEN CoP 2001 recommends at least two reviews a year and more frequently for younger children)<sup>2</sup>.
- 8 A record of the child's progress against the IEP targets or individual learning plan should be reviewed regularly and targets evaluated; all of which should be shared and discussed with parents/carers.<sup>3</sup>
- 9 At the review the following outcomes are possible:
  - a. The child's special educational needs have been met and the child is working independently within the planned work for that age range, (Range 0).
  - b. Some targets have not been achieved and new strategies need to be considered (Ranges 1 and 2).
  - c. New targets are set and new actions are recorded on individualised planning or on an IEP as appropriate (Ranges 1 and 2).
  - d. After an appropriate amount of time, if no significant progress has been made the additional and different provision needs to be increased. This may be equivalent to Early Years Action Plus within the SEN Code of Practice.<sup>4</sup> (Moving up a range.)

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<sup>1</sup> Support is available to SENCOs in deciding when an IEP should be in place. Current Guidance on planning for personalised learning suggests that an IEP may not always be necessary dependent on the planning and recording systems in the setting.

<sup>2</sup> CoP 4:28

<sup>3</sup> CoP 4:18 to 4:19

<sup>4</sup> CoP 4:31

- 10 The new intervention(s) is implemented and should follow a review cycle.
- 11 If the child is not making progress after two review cycles, then the setting should consider input from external services (e.g. Integrated Inclusion Services, Speech and Language Therapy Service, Social Care Services, Health Services etc) to carry out further assessments (possibly more specialised assessments) and make recommendations for new IEP actions and targets.<sup>5</sup>
- 12 Currently, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council makes specialist advice available through:  
  
Integrated Inclusion Services - Educational Psychology Service, Sensory Service, Learning and Cognition Service, Communication and Interaction Service, Speech and Language Therapy Service and Paediatric Therapy Services.
- 13 Alternatively the educational setting is able to purchase specialist advice from an external source.

## The Guidance

1 There are two sections:

- The Early Years Threshold Descriptors for:  
Visual Impairment S2.2  
Hearing Impairment S2.3  
Physical Difficulties S2.4  
Behavioural, Social and Emotional Difficulties S2.5  
General Learning Difficulties S2.6  
Speech, Language and Communication Needs (including autism) S2.7
- Guidance to help decide whether or not to request Top-up Funding

	Average students
	Range 0 Within normal differentiation
	Range 1 Additional interventions
	Range 2 Additional interventions supported by external advice
	Range 3 Specialist interventions e.g. a Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
	Range 4 High level of need
	Range 5 Complex and/or severe needs which may require more specialist provision

- 2 The Threshold Descriptors describe the provision to be made from 'Range 1'. It is expected that settings will be making 'Range 0' provision as part of their 'normal differentiation'. NEF children with learning difficulties should be receiving initial support through materials produced over the last few years by DfE.  
(<http://www.education.gov.uk/search/results?q=learning+difficulties>)
- 3 Although settings need to refer to the Threshold Descriptor of a child's primary special educational need, it is recognised that the impact of a secondary need may increase the level of provision and resources required.

<sup>5</sup> CoP 4:30 & 4:32

## Notes

- 1 A working group has been established to make any necessary revisions to the Guidance and Threshold Descriptors. It is anticipated that this work will be completed May 2013.
- 2 The Guidance documents including the Threshold Descriptors will need to change over time to reflect feedback from educational settings; working in a consultative way.
- 3 The material is deliberately called 'Guidance' **NOT** 'Criteria'. This is because each element treats a discrete aspect of a child's learning. It is important to synthesise this evidence with other information about the child to obtain a 'holistic' picture before deciding on the appropriate provision. The focus will be on the progress of the child and barriers that they may be experiencing to learning.
- 4 The Threshold Descriptors documents follow a similar but not identical format. This reflects the different approaches to each area of need.
- 5 Ranges in each Threshold Descriptor document have been kept consistent to develop a transparent process that can be understood by practitioners and parents/carers.
- 6 Parents/carers must be fully involved and consulted at all stages of the process.

## The following guidance is provided to help SENCOs decide whether or not to request Top-up Funding.

For NEF children with substantial special educational needs the process for requesting Top-up Funding needs to be followed. The process is set out below and should be used in conjunction with the detailed guidance provided in the previous sections.

### 1 Has the setting done all it can?

Has the setting taken all appropriate steps to identify, assess and meet the special educational needs of the child and made all reasonable adjustments (as stated in The Equality Act 2010)?

- i Describe any reasonable adjustments made by the setting and how they relate to the individual child.
- ii Describe the outcomes of particular, targeted support received by the child.
- iii You will need to confirm that the IEPs describe clear and appropriate targets and support arrangements with a clear focus on progress.
- iv Is there evidence of progress made in relation to the success criteria of the IEP targets?
- v Describe what whole-setting arrangements (such as staff awareness, additional training, physical adaptations, consistent management strategies etc) have been put in place?
- vi Describe the use of a range of IT to support a child's learning (if appropriate).
- vii Have the needs of the child and the provision available in the setting been shared with parents/carers?

*If the responses to each of the issues raised in this section demonstrate that the setting has done all it can, move on to Criterion 2.*

### 2 Would some external support help?

- i Describe the steps which have been taken.
- ii A Common Assessment Framework must be in place.
- iii Explain the external agencies which have been involved.
- iv How long have these external agencies been involved?
- v How has external support extended the provision the setting is making?
- vi Describe how the support received from external agencies has been acted upon and reflected in the arrangements made for the child in the setting (refer to Criterion 1 - indicator 5 above).
- vii Describe the parental view on the involvement of the external support and the need for Top-up Funding.

*If the needs of the child have still not been addressed, move on to Criterion 3.*

- 3 Is there evidence to indicate that the special educational needs of the child are exceptional in relation to other children of the same age within Barnsley MBC and that a request to the BMBC's SEN Provision Panel for Top-up funding is called for?**
- i Describe in detail the unmet needs and actions that need to be taken that cannot be met from the setting's budget.
  - ii What evidence is available from external agencies to demonstrate that the child's needs are severe/complex relative to other children of the same age within Barnsley MBC?
  - iii What evidence is available from external agencies to demonstrate that the child's needs are long-term?