





 **Specialist Provision Review Framework for**

**SEN units, resourced provisions and internal specialist provisions**

**Introduction:**

This framework has been developed to support school and trust leaders to evaluate / review the quality of specialist provision within mainstream schools.

DfE data[[1]](#footnote-1) shows that in January 2024, there were 392 schools in England with SEN units and 1,168 schools with a resourced provision, providing school places for approximately 28,000 pupils across primary and secondary schools.

According to the DfE definition:

* *SEN units* are special provisions within a mainstream school where the pupils with SEN are taught mainly within separate classes.
* *Resourced provisions* are places that are reserved at a mainstream school for pupils with a specific type of SEN, taught for at least half of their time within mainstream classes, but requiring a base and some specialist facilities around the school.

SEN units and resourced provisions are designated by the local authority (LA) specifically for making SEN provision. Generally, they:

* receive additional funding from the LA specifically for the purpose of the provision.
* cater for a specific type or types of SEN e.g. communication and interaction.
* are usually for pupils with EHC plans (but could include pupils without a plan, for example where assessment is being undertaken).

Some LAs may not locally make a clear distinction between SEN units and resourced provision or may use alternative terms for equivalent types of provision e.g. enhanced resource base, designated specialist provision, additionally resourced provision).

Some schools and trusts have developed their own internal specialist provision within mainstream to support the increase in complexity of need amongst pupils with SEND. This framework can also be used to review / evaluate this type of internal provision, although some of the statements may be less relevant in this context.

For the purposes of this framework and ease of use, the generic term *‘specialist provision’ (SP)* is used throughout to refer to any of the above type of provisions.

**Using the review framework:**

The review framework is designed as a tool to support leaders’ discussions and evaluations around the quality of their specialist provision. The framework considers 5 key areas of effective specialist provision:

1. Leadership and management
2. Environment
3. Knowledge of pupils, assessment and outcomes
4. Curriculum, teaching and learning
5. Wider provision and partnerships

Within each area, there are a series of statements that can be used to focus leaders’ discussions and consider evidence. Each statement can be evaluated, and a judgement made against the following criteria:

Beg = Beginning

Dev = Developing

Sec = Secure

Emb = Embedded

Following the discussions and agreement of the judgements, leaders can identify areas of strength and next steps within each of the 5 areas. Strengths can be shared and built upon, and next steps can help to inform strategic planning.

**Authorship:**

This framework was adapted from an original school SEND Review Framework written by Malcolm Reeve and Natalie Packer. It has been developed and trialed in partnership with Tees Valley Education Trust (TVEd) and Impact MAT by:

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| **School / Trust** | **Personnel involved** | **Review Date** |
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| **1.Leadership and management**  | **Beg** | **Dev** | **Sec** | **Emb** |
| Leaders and governors have an inclusive ethos and have a clear vision for the SP as an integral part of their school. The vision is communicated to all stakeholders. |  |  |  |  |
| The SP is reflected in all relevant whole school policies, documents, and information, including curriculum documents, the SEND Policy, accessibility policy and SEN Information Report. Information on the SP is accessible for all stakeholders, including parents.  |  |  |  |  |
| There is a development plan in place for the SP with clear aims and objectives that link to the whole school development plan. Self-evaluation of the quality of provision and outcomes in the SP informs the development planning process. |  |  |  |  |
| The SP is led by an appropriately qualified and experienced member of staff. Communication between the SP Lead and SLT is effective.  |  |  |  |  |
| The SP is appropriately staffed. The adult: pupil ratio is monitored to ensure the learning and safety of all pupils and staff. In addition to the SP Lead, other staff have appropriate qualifications, skills and experience. |  |  |  |  |
| All staff within the SP are clear of their responsibilities. They have performance management / appraisal and are given a range of opportunities to engage in high-quality continued professional development for SEND.  |  |  |  |  |
| All staff in the school have a clear understanding of the purpose of the SP. They understand their roles / responsibilities towards pupils in the SP and work in partnership with SP staff. All school staff receive CPD on working with pupils with complex needs.  |  |  |  |  |
| There are clear criteria for admissions (entry and exit) to the SP. Where appropriate, this is agreed in consultation with the LA. Criteria is made available to all stakeholders, including parents. |  |  |  |  |
| There is a clear Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place with the local authority, including details on funding arrangements, responsibilities, local authority support and quality assurance processes. The SLA is regularly reviewed.  |  |  |  |  |
| All staff are effectively implementing the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice and the Equality Act (2010), including making reasonable adjustments, for pupils in the SP.  |  |  |  |  |
| Leaders and governors monitor the use of funding delegated to the SP to ensure that the needs of the pupils are being met through appropriate levels of staffing and support.  |  |  |  |  |
| Leaders and governors regularly monitor and evaluate the quality of provision in the SP. They are fully involved in its strategic development.  |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas of strength for leadership and management:** | **Next steps for leadership and management:**  |

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| **2. Environment** | **Beg** | **Dev** | **Sec** | **Emb** |
| There is dedicated space in the school for the SP. The space is fully accessible and has safe and secure internal and external environments. Where appropriate, the space conforms to government guidance (Building Bulletin 104)  |  |  |  |  |
| There are a range of appropriate spaces that can be used flexibly e.g. for teaching, intervention, calming, sensory breaks, soft play, outside space, additional facilities such as lifts, toilets, changing area, space for large equipment such as wheelchairs. |  |  |  |  |
| The whole school environment has been developed and resourced to meet the needs of pupils within the SP e.g. visuals, workspaces, sensory resources, technology. Lighting, heat and sound requirements are considered.  |  |  |  |  |
| The whole school environment has been adapted to enable and promote inclusion, allowing joint learning and shared activities where everyone is safe and secure. This includes large communal spaces and social areas.  |  |  |  |  |
| Effective methods of communication are considered and implemented by all staff to enable pupils in the SP to engage. There is consistent use of agreed language by all staff.  |  |  |  |  |
| Clear routines, structure, expectations and approaches to behaviour are in place in the SP. These are consistently applied by staff across the school where appropriate.  |  |  |  |  |
| Timetables for pupils in the SP are carefully planned to allow for flexibility, personalisation and effective deployment of staff.  |  |  |  |  |
| All staff provide support for pupils transitioning between the SP and mainstream e.g. when accessing inclusion opportunities.  |  |  |  |  |
| Barriers to learning are regularly reviewed and environments are adapted to ensure continued accessibility for all. |  |  |  |  |
| Where relevant, any off-site provision is fully inclusive and accessible for pupils in the SP.  |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas of strength for environment:** | **Next steps for environment:** |

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| **3. Knowledge of pupils, assessment and outcomes** | **Beg** | **Dev** | **Sec** | **Emb** |
| Appropriate paperwork is securely shared with feeder and transitioning school / setting prior to transition. On transition, a full assessment of pupil’s needs is carried out and used to inform planning. |  |  |  |  |
| Systems and processes are in place to ensure effective communication between SP and mainstream staff about pupils in the SP, including sharing information about the needs of pupils. All staff use the information to inform their teaching and daily interactions with pupils.  |  |  |  |  |
| A range of formative, summative and diagnostic assessment information is used to support accurate identification of need and to monitor progress of pupils in the SP. |  |  |  |  |
| There is a graduated approach to SEN in place and the ‘assess, plan, do, review’ cycle is embedded for all pupils in the SP. Staff are committed to a child-centred approach.  |  |  |  |  |
| High quality individual support plans are developed for pupils in the SP, outlining their strengths, needs, provision and targets. Plans are developed and reviewed regularly with parents, pupils and relevant professionals. Plans are quality assured by leaders.  |  |  |  |  |
| The progress of pupils in the SP is closely monitored on an on-going basis through inclusive assessment and tracking systems and processes.  |  |  |  |  |
| A range of methods are used to evidence progress e.g. pupil books, annotated photographs, adult observations. This is an embedded part of the monitoring cycle and involves all members of the senior leadership team |  |  |  |  |
| Pupils in the SP achieve well against their curriculum key objectives, across a range of subjects.  |  |  |  |  |
| Pupils in the SP achieve well when considered against their personal targets and longer-term outcomes (as expressed in EHCPs and Individual Support Plans).  |  |  |  |  |
| Pupils in the SP achieve relevant skills to prepare them for adulthood e.g. independence, safety, health, progressing to the next stage of education, employment or training.  |  |  |  |  |
| Levels of attendance, exclusions and behaviour of pupils in the SP are closely monitored by all leaders. There is no over-representation of pupils in the SP where attendance, exclusions or behaviour are a concern. |  |  |  |  |
| Pupils in the SP are happy to come to school, feel safe and are proud of their achievements. Their parents speak positively of the support they receive, and the outcomes achieved.  |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas of strength for knowledge of pupils, assessment and outcomes:** | **Next steps for knowledge of pupils, assessment and outcomes:**  |

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| **4. Curriculum, teaching and learning** | **Beg** | **Dev** | **Sec** | **Emb** |
| The curriculum offer for pupils in the SP is ambitious in its intent. Expectations of pupils in the SP are high.  |  |  |  |  |
| The curriculum in the SP is specifically designed, developed, and adapted to meet the needs of the pupils while still rooted in national curriculum entitlement and expectations. Where appropriate, the curriculum includes vocational pathways and opportunities to develop key skills e.g. social, communication, life, physical, personal care, independence.  |  |  |  |  |
| Curriculum planning takes into consideration the mainstream curriculum where appropriate. Curriculum leaders across the school support planning for the SP.  |  |  |  |  |
| Where appropriate, a therapeutic curriculum is equally valued, and pupils are able to access this as part of their everyday provision and entitlement. This is carefully considered by all leaders within the SP and the wider school. |  |  |  |  |
| Pupils’ EHCPs, individual learning plans, advice from external professionals and prior assessments are used to inform lesson planning.  |  |  |  |  |
| There is shared agreement on what high quality teaching / ordinarily available provision looks like within the SP and staff in the SP are confident to implement this. This includes effective use of technology / curriculum-based software.  |  |  |  |  |
| A range of appropriate teaching strategies are employed that support pupils’ needs. Staff in the SP use evidence, research and advice from external professionals to identify, share and model good practice in relation to effective teaching for pupils in the SP. |  |  |  |  |
| Where relevant, opportunities for inclusion within the mainstream curriculum are carefully planned. Teaching staff in the mainstream liaise closely with SP staff and specifically plan for inclusion of the pupils in lessons.  |  |  |  |  |
| Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to provide support for pupils in the SP, move learning forward and promote independence.  |  |  |  |  |
| Specialist teaching / intervention / therapy / access arrangements are in place to meet the needs of individual pupils in the SP, providing a focus on their EHCP or individual support plan provision and targets. This provision is regularly reviewed for impact.  |  |  |  |  |
| Pupils in the SP are provided with effective support to develop their social and emotional wellbeing, self-awareness and emotional regulation.  |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas of strength for curriculum, teaching and learning:** | **Next steps for curriculum, teaching and learning:**  |

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| **5. Wider provision and partnerships**  | **Beg** | **Dev** | **Sec** | **Emb** |
| Parents of pupils in the SP are provided with a range of opportunities to communicate, and work in partnership, with SP staff at an individual and strategic level. Parents are provided with regular information about their child.  |  |  |  |  |
| SP staff and parents work in partnership to achieve genuine co-production for pupils in the SP with EHC plans.  |  |  |  |  |
| A range of opportunities for parent and pupil voice are provided. The views of parents and pupils in the SP are sought, listened to and acted upon.  |  |  |  |  |
| There are equal opportunities, and no barriers to participation, for pupils in the SP to become involved in the wider school life e.g. assemblies, break times, school trips, extra-curricular activities, student council. Pupils in the SP are part of the whole school community.  |  |  |  |  |
| High quality external agency support is engaged appropriately and utilised effectively to support assessment, planning and delivery of provision and staff CPD. Communication between external agencies, parents and SP staff is effective.  |  |  |  |  |
| There are clear policies, procedures and practice in place to support all points of transition for pupils in the SP.  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff in the SP have opportunities to network with other staff from the specialist sector and share good practice. They are outward facing and look to improve their practice and provision.  |  |  |  |  |
| **Areas of strength for wider provision and partnerships:**  | **Next steps for wider provision and partnerships:**   |

1. [https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england#](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)