



Oakridge Schools Federation
(Oakridge Infant, Nursery and Junior Schools)

SEN Support: Identification and Criteria Guidance 2026–2027

Approved by:	Full Governing Body
Review frequency:	Annually
Date last approved:	Autumn 2026
Next review date due:	Autumn 2027

This guidance should be read alongside the Oakridge Schools Federation Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy 2026-2027 and the Federation's SEN Information Report. It reflects Hampshire County Council's Ordinarily Available Provision and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Support Guidance (March 2025).

Purpose of this guidance

This document provides practical guidance for staff when considering whether a pupil may have special educational needs (SEN) and require SEN Support. It supports consistent professional judgement across the Federation. It is not a diagnostic checklist and does not replace the statutory definition of SEN or the graduated approach set out in the Federation's SEND Policy.

Principles

High-quality inclusive and adaptive teaching is the first response to pupils who have or may have SEN. Special educational provision is provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for others of the same age in a mainstream setting.

- Decisions are informed by the views of pupils and their parents/carers.
- Staff maintain high expectations and ambitious outcomes for all pupils.
- Provision is reviewed for its impact on progress, participation, development and independence.
- Identification of SEN is based on the individual pupil's needs and evidence, not solely on attainment, progress, diagnosis or presenting behaviour.
- The school will not delay in putting appropriate teaching, adjustments or intervention in place while assessment and identification are ongoing.

Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP)

At Oakridge Schools Federation, high-quality inclusive and adaptive teaching and Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) are the first response to pupils who have or may have additional needs. OAP is the provision made available as part of the Federation's usual inclusive practice. Hampshire's guidance describes both universal provision, available to every learner, and more targeted ordinarily available provision for pupils who require additional support.

OAP may include adaptations to the learning environment, explicit and scaffolded teaching, visual support, adapted resources, additional processing time, flexible grouping, targeted prompting, communication support, opportunities for regulation and reasonable adjustments.

Where monitoring indicates that a pupil is experiencing ongoing barriers to learning, development or participation despite the consistent application of appropriate OAP, further investigation will take place to consider whether the pupil may have SEN and require SEN Support.

OAP or SEN Support?

Level	What this means at Oakridge
Universal OAP	Inclusive provision available to all pupils as part of everyday teaching, learning and the school environment.
Targeted OAP	More targeted adaptations or support within ordinarily available provision. A pupil does not need to be on the SEN Register to access this.
SEN Support	The pupil has SEN and requires special educational provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for pupils of the same age. Provision is planned and reviewed through assess, plan, do and review.
EHCP	Where a pupil's needs may require provision to be secured through an Education, Health and Care Plan, an EHC needs assessment may be considered in accordance with the SEND Policy.

Identifying SEN and SEN Support

A pupil has SEN where they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A pupil requires SEN Support where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for pupils of the same age. SEN Support complements, rather than replaces, high-quality inclusive teaching and OAP.

Where SEN is suspected, staff will gather evidence to develop a fuller understanding of the pupil's strengths, needs and barriers to learning. Evidence may include:

- the pupil's views and the views of parents/carers;
- teacher assessment, observation, work and progress information;
- the pupil's development and participation across different contexts;
- the teaching, adaptations, reasonable adjustments and interventions already provided;
- the pupil's response to OAP and targeted support;
- relevant information from previous settings; and
- advice from relevant professionals, where appropriate.

Where the evidence indicates that the pupil requires special educational provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for pupils of the same age, the pupil will be identified as having SEN, recorded on the SEN Register and supported through the graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review.

Indicators for further investigation

The following may indicate that further assessment and investigation are required. They do not, individually or collectively, constitute a checklist or automatic threshold for SEN Support. Difficulties may be evident even where a pupil's academic attainment is broadly in line with peers.

- **Cognition and learning:** attention, memory, processing, organisation, applying learning, acquiring or retaining skills, literacy or numeracy.
- **Communication and interaction:** understanding or expressing spoken language, processing verbal information, social communication, conversations, friendships or unfamiliar situations.
- **Social, emotional and mental health:** relationships, engagement, regulation, managing emotions, frustration, withdrawal, attendance, impulse control or coping with change.
- **Sensory and/or physical:** sensory processing, hearing, vision, fine or gross motor skills, physical access, fatigue, personal care or participation in different environments.

Staff should seek to understand the underlying need or barrier rather than relying solely on presenting behaviour. A pupil's needs may span more than one broad area and may change over time.

Communication and Interaction

Pupils with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) may have difficulty communicating with others. Difficulties may relate to expressing themselves, understanding spoken language, processing information or understanding and using the social rules of communication. The profile of need will vary between pupils and over time.

Possible indicators and barriers to learning

- Persistent difficulty understanding spoken instructions or age-appropriate language;
- difficulty expressing ideas, needs or emotions verbally;
- difficulty retaining or processing spoken information;
- difficulty initiating, sustaining or understanding conversations and social situations;
- difficulty forming or sustaining peer relationships;
- difficulty with inference, abstract or non-literal language;
- communication differences that significantly affect access to learning or participation.

Possible SEN Support approaches

The following are examples rather than a prescribed entitlement or checklist. Provision should be selected according to individual need and reviewed for impact.

- Curriculum adjustments to meet language and communication needs;
- evidence-based language or social communication interventions;
- personalised visual timetables, processes or reminders;
- planned support for transitions and unstructured times;
- structured opportunities to develop communication and interaction;
- alternative or augmentative communication where appropriate;
- specialist Speech and Language Therapy advice or programmes where involved.

Autism / Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)

Autistic pupils may experience differences in social communication and interaction, patterns of thinking, flexibility, sensory processing and regulation. Presentation and impact vary considerably between individual pupils and across different environments. A diagnosis of autism does not, in itself, determine whether a pupil requires SEN Support; consideration is given to the pupil's individual needs, barriers and the special educational provision required.

- Differences in social communication or understanding social situations;
- difficulty managing transitions, unexpected changes or unfamiliar situations;
- differences in flexible thinking or a strong need for predictability;
- sensory differences which affect access, regulation or participation;
- significant anxiety or dysregulation linked to environmental or communication demands;
- difficulty recognising, expressing or understanding emotions.

Cognition and Learning

Support for cognition and learning needs may be required where a pupil experiences persistent difficulty acquiring, retaining, processing, organising or applying learning despite appropriate high-quality inclusive and adaptive teaching and support. This area includes general learning difficulties and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia and dysgraphia.

Possible indicators and barriers to learning

- Persistent difficulties in aspects of literacy, numeracy or wider curriculum learning;
- slow acquisition or retention of new knowledge and skills;
- working memory or processing difficulties;
- difficulty understanding, sequencing, organising or applying information;
- difficulty transferring learning between contexts;
- specific difficulties with reading, spelling, writing, mathematics or motor coordination.

Possible SEN Support approaches

The following are examples rather than a prescribed entitlement or checklist. Provision should be selected according to individual need and reviewed for impact.

- Evidence-based interventions for phonics, reading, comprehension, spelling or number;
- assistive technology where appropriate;
- overlearning and consolidation to support automaticity and retrieval;
- pre-teaching of vocabulary, concepts or materials;
- small-group or targeted instruction;
- explicit support for memory, organisation and executive functioning;
- alternative recording methods where appropriate.

Social, Emotional and mental health (SEMH)

Pupils may experience a wide range of social, emotional or mental health difficulties which can affect learning, participation, relationships and wellbeing. Behaviour alone does not constitute SEN. Where persistent difficulties are evident, staff will seek to understand the underlying needs and barriers, including whether communication, interaction, learning, sensory, developmental or environmental factors are contributing.

Possible indicators and barriers to learning

- Persistent difficulty regulating emotions or responses when things go wrong;
- withdrawal, isolation or difficulty engaging in learning;
- persistent difficulties with relationships or working with others;
- significant anxiety associated with school, learning or particular environments;
- avoidance, dysregulation or heightened responses which create barriers to participation;
- difficulty managing impulses, frustration, change or unfamiliar situations;
- attendance difficulties underlying SEN may be contributing.

Possible SEN Support approaches

The following are examples rather than a prescribed entitlement or checklist. Provision should be selected according to individual need and reviewed for impact.

- Planned access to trusted/key adults;
- personalised regulation plans and identified regulation spaces;
- targeted support during transitions and unstructured times;
- emotion coaching and emotional literacy support;
- positive behaviour support or individualised support plans where appropriate;
- de-escalation approaches and predictable routines;
- risk assessment and management planning where required;
- appropriate involvement of external professionals.

Sensory and/or physical needs

Some pupils require special educational provision because sensory or physical needs create barriers to accessing learning, the environment or participation. This may include vision impairment, hearing impairment, multi-sensory impairment, physical disability, motor difficulties or significant sensory processing needs. A disability does not automatically constitute SEN; the school will consider whether special educational provision is required while also meeting its Equality Act duties.

Possible indicators and barriers to learning

- Difficulty hearing, seeing or accessing information in the usual classroom environment;
- fine or gross motor difficulties which significantly affect access or recording;
- physical access, mobility, fatigue or positioning needs;
- sensory differences which significantly affect regulation, concentration or participation;
- personal care needs requiring planned support;
- difficulty participating in particular environments, routines or activities because of physical or sensory barriers.

Possible SEN Support approaches

The following are examples rather than a prescribed entitlement or checklist. Provision should be selected according to individual need and reviewed for impact.

- Appropriate seating, positioning and environmental adaptations;
- specialist or assistive equipment and technology;
- adjustments to recording demands, routines or uniform where appropriate;
- planned rest or movement breaks;

- personal care plans were required;
- monitoring and support for specialist equipment;
- advice from Specialist Teacher Advisory Services, health professionals or other relevant specialists.

Assess, Plan, Do, Review

Pupils identified as requiring SEN Support will be supported through the graduated approach. Decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised as understanding of the pupil's strengths, needs and response to support develops.

- **Assess:** Gather and review evidence about strengths, needs, barriers, progress, development and response to teaching and support, including pupil and parent/carer views.
- **Plan:** Agree outcomes, provision, adjustments, interventions, responsibilities and review arrangements. Relevant staff should understand the pupil's needs and the approaches required.
- **Do:** The class teacher remains responsible and accountable for the pupil's progress and development. Additional support supplements, rather than replaces, high-quality classroom teaching.
- **Review:** Evaluate the impact of provision against agreed outcomes, consider pupil and parent/carer views, and decide whether support should continue, change, increase, reduce or cease.

Effective use of additional adult support

Additional adult support should be carefully planned, responsive to individual need and focused on building independence. One-to-one support may be appropriate for particular interventions, access or safety needs, but continuous attached-adult support should not be assumed to be the most effective response. Adult support should add value to classroom teaching, maintain access to peers and promote problem-solving, participation and independence.

Education, Health and Care needs assessment

Where, despite relevant and purposeful action through the graduated approach, a pupil has not made expected progress and their needs may require provision beyond that ordinarily available through SEN Support, consideration may be given to requesting an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment.

The decision will be based on the individual pupil's needs and circumstances and evidence of the provision already made and its impact. The Local Authority is responsible for determining whether an EHC needs assessment is necessary and, following assessment, whether it is necessary to issue an EHCP.

Full details of EHC needs assessments, EHCPs and Annual Reviews are contained within the Oakridge Schools Federation SEND Policy 2026-2027.

Exiting SEN Support

Where review evidence demonstrates that a pupil no longer requires special educational provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for pupils of the same age, the school may determine that SEN Support is no longer required. This decision will be

discussed with the pupil and their parents/carers and informed by evidence of the pupil's progress, needs and the sustainability of that progress.

The pupil will continue to be monitored through the school's usual assessment and monitoring arrangements. If concerns subsequently arise, their needs will be reconsidered through the graduated approach.

Framework for this guidance

This guidance has been developed with regard to the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years and Hampshire County Council's Ordinarily Available Provision and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Support Guidance (March 2025). It should be read alongside the Oakridge Schools Federation Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy 2026-2027 and SEN Information Report. It will be reviewed alongside the Federation's SEND Policy and updated in response to changes in legislation, statutory guidance and relevant Hampshire County Council guidance.