



Asking the Right Questions as the SEN Governor

How does the school manage SEND?

You should always assure yourself that:

- The school complies with the [SEND Code of Practice](#) at all times
- The school's SEND provision is set out in the [SEND information report](#) – a statutory document which must be published on the school's website (this report may form the basis of your discussion, as many of the answers to these questions will be set out in it)

Look out for points like:

- The first response to supporting pupils with SEND is high-quality differentiated teaching
- Every teacher is expected to meet the needs of pupils with SEND through their teaching, additional strategies and in-class interventions
- When a teacher is concerned about a pupil who may, or does have SEND, they can raise this with the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), along with evidence of what they've already done to help the pupil
- The SENCO will proceed with education health care (EHC) needs assessment process if and when required
- Once the pupil is placed on the SEN register, the SENCO will:
 - Discuss with the teacher, parents and pupils what additional or different provision the school can offer
 - Complete the necessary paperwork – which might be an individual education plan or similar
 - Agree targets and a review date
 - Follow a graduated approach when making special educational provision which includes 4 stages of action: 'assess, plan, do, review' (see page 100 of the SEND code of practice for more information)
 - Meet with parents and the pupil each term to review progress and set new targets
- The SENCO will monitor the provision to make sure it's having an impact on a pupil's progress – if it's not then they'll find out why and see what else could be offered
- If support staff deliver interventions, they're appropriately trained and monitored by the SENCO
- If pupils aren't making progress, the SENCO works with external specialists to review the needs of the pupil. This might include an educational psychologist or a speech and language therapist



How many pupils are on the SEND register?

Your SENCO should know the number of pupils who either:

- Have an EHC plan
- Are on SEN support and receive additional provision

National statistics show that overall, 3.1% of pupils have an EHC plan, and 12.1% are on SEN support.

Key point to remember – you don't need to know which individual pupils receive additional SEND support to fulfil your monitoring role.

Do you have an action plan (or similar)? What have you put in place for each target and how do you know they're working?

The SENCO should have a document that sets out their objectives and targets for SEND across the school.

They should be able to explain:

- What's happened to date to meet each objective
- What evidence the objectives are based on
- How each objective is being monitored
- What progress is being made

How do the attendance rates for pupils with SEND compare to those without?

The SENCO should have the data available to show you. They should be able to explain:

- What the data is telling the school about attendance for pupils with SEND, and point out any trends that they've identified
- What has been done to follow up on any attendance issues
- The reasons for absence and whether they're preventable; for example, pupils with medical needs may have had legitimate absences for hospital appointments
- What effect pupils absent for medical reasons have on the overall absence rates for pupils with SEND
- How parents have been involved in improving attendance and exclusion rates

How do the exclusion rates for pupils with SEND compare to those without?

The SENCO should have the data available to show you. They should be able to explain:

- What the data is telling the school about exclusions for pupils with SEND, and point out any trends that they've identified



- For each case, what support had previously been put in place for support that pupil and how they were involved in supporting excluded pupils with underlying needs

Pupils with SEND are more likely to be excluded than pupils without, or to be informally removed from the school in a practice called 'off-rolling'. [This article](#) will help you spot the signs and prevent off-rolling.

What is the progress and attainment of pupils with SEND compared to that of other pupils?

The SENCO should be able to show you the data, and comment on:

- Where the attainment gaps are
- If the gaps are in any specific subjects, and for any particular groups of pupils (e.g., boys with autism)

What is being done to improve the progress and attainment of these pupils? How do you know it's working?

The SENCO should explain:

- The interventions and support being provided
- How effective these interventions are proving to be
- What evidence they're based on
- If there's been a particularly successful intervention, why was it so successful and how the school can replicate this success in the future

How are children, young people and parents of pupils with SEND involved in the processes?

The SENCO should explain:

- All parents of pupils on the SEN register are informed about what this means for their child, and how this is done e.g., through a letter, email, or a face-to-face meeting
- Teachers meet with parents of pupils with SEND 3 times per year, how and when these meetings take place, and what format they take
- Pupils with an EHC plan have an annual review which involves the parents, and how this is managed in the school
- There is regular communication between meetings, which includes sharing positive moments as well as difficult ones
- How children and young people's views are gathered, e.g. through the use of person-centred planning tools

How do you support other teachers who work with pupils with SEND?

The SENCO should be able to explain:



- What training staff have had
- The in-class support teachers receive (for example, specialist teaching assistants or resources)
- How SEND support staff are deployed throughout the school and what impact this has

Are there resources you don't have which you need to carry out the role effectively?

All SENCOs are likely to have something they need.

You could ask:

- What impact do you think this has on your work?
- What evidence do you have that this is a need?
- How do you decide what the priority for external support is?

You should make clear that their concerns are noted and that as governors, you'll do what you can.

Best practice is for the SENCO to be a part of the Senior Leadership Team and have sufficient time and financial knowledge to fulfil the requirements of their role.

Is there training you need to help you fulfil your role?

SENCOs **must** have completed the National Award for SEN Co-ordination within 3 years of appointment, if they haven't previously been a SENCO for more than 12 months. This is set out in the [SEND Code of Practice](#) (see page 108).

If your SENCO requests any training, especially the national award, feed this back to the headteacher to arrange with the SENCO.

Adapted from [SEND: questions to ask | The Key for School Governors \(thekeysupport.com\)](#)