



Scoil San Treasa Board of Management



The Rise, Mount Merrion, Co. Dublin A94EK75

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity to the whole school community on the principles underpinning our special education teaching (SET) model, the organisation and the process for the deployment of SET resources, the roles and responsibilities of school management and staff, and the problem-solving process for identification of need, planning, support and intervention, and review of response to intervention.

1.1. Whole-School Approach

Scoil San Treasa is an inclusive school, where inclusion is the responsibility of the whole school community, with a shared understanding of the need for all to experience belonging and connectedness, and a sense of being valued members of our community. An inclusive school is one that recognises and celebrates diversity, and this includes neurodiversity. Neurodiversity means that not all children experience the world in the same way. It emphasises the importance of respecting, valuing and celebrating such differences. We strive to use available resources to enable pupils with special educational needs (SEN) to access, participate in and benefit from a broad range of learning experiences in our school. Our Mission Statement informs our overall approach:

"At Scoil San Treasa, our mission is the provision of primary education of the highest quality for all our pupils in a happy, safe, Christian environment. While we value high academic achievement, the social, personal and moral development of our pupils is of primary importance and we view the school as a learning organisation which is open to change and innovation while it cherishes the best educational, cultural and religious traditions of our society. Acknowledging that their parents are the primary educators of our children, we are inspired by a shared vision of excellence and we espouse a partnership approach in its pursuit".

In Scoil San Treasa, we are mindful of how the culture, ethos and learning environment of the school demonstrates to each pupil that they are respected and valued and we endeavour to promote the moral, social, emotional, cultural, intellectual and physical development of all learners.

"All pupils have needs including the need to feel a sense of belonging, the need to feel safe, the need to communicate and to be communicated with and the need to be respected and valued. In meeting these needs, teachers need to view their pupils as learning not only within their classroom setting but also within the context of the ethos and culture of the school." (Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers DES 2007)

1.2 Enrolment of children with Special educational needs (SEN)

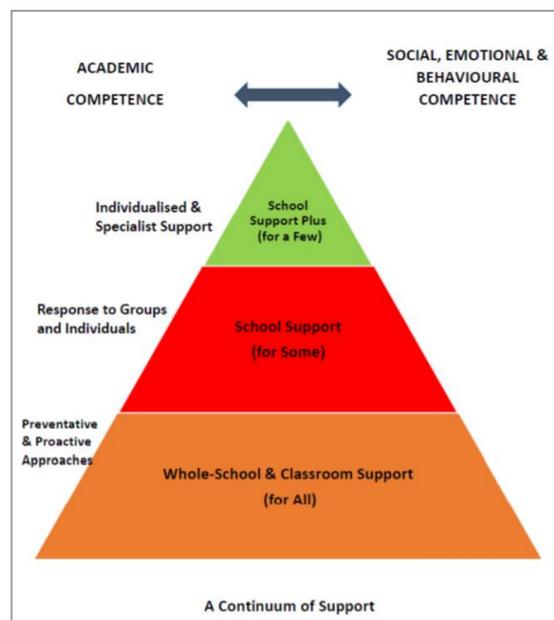
The key premise of the SET allocation is that resources are deployed to support children's SEN. **Importantly, those with the greatest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support.** Children may have a range of identified needs in areas such as literacy, numeracy, language and communication, social interaction, emotional development, sensory and physical development. SET resources are allocated for the sole purpose of providing additional teaching support to children with these identified needs. If a pupil has SEN, it is the responsibility of the parents to notify the school in a timely way. Please refer to our current Admission Policy in this regard. (Note: Our Admission Policy is an important document. Accordingly, parents of all applicants are required to confirm on the admission application form that they have read the current Admission Policy prior to submitting the admission application.)

It is planned that Scoil San Treasa will open a support class for Autistic children in September 2027.

2. Continuum of Support

2.1. A staged approach to Intervention

Scoil San Treasa adopts a staged approach to intervention, guided by the *Continuum of Support* framework which scaffolds the provision of support for children with SEN. This framework recognises that SEN occurs along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term, and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified educational needs. Use of this approach helps to ensure that interventions are incremental - moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support - and that they are informed by careful monitoring of progress. Pupils' educational needs include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. The educational needs of most children can be met through interventions by the class teacher (Stage I). Some children will require additional support (Stage II). A small number of children will require individualised and specialist support (Stage III). The allocation of these supports is recorded and monitored at each level of the Continuum of Support. Importantly, those with the greatest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support. A whole school focus on the development of wellbeing is the foundation upon which the Continuum of Support is applied and implemented across all aspects of teaching, learning and school life. Belonging and connectedness to the school community is fostered and reflected in school policy, planning and practice.



2.2. Stage I - Classroom Support

This involves support for all children in the classroom and includes universal, preventative and proactive teaching and learning approaches at classroom level. The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class and over time monitors the response of pupils to the differentiated programme (See Appendix C). A class teacher or parent may have concerns about the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of certain pupils. The teacher should then administer screening measures, which may include screening checklists and profiles, standardised, norm-referenced tests for older pupils and behavioural checklists where appropriate. Parent and pupil input into the process is sought as appropriate and as is feasible. Teacher observations over time are a valuable component of the overall process and especially at this early stage. Observation documents are recorded on Aladdin. The class teacher should then draw up a short, simple plan for extra help to be implemented within the normal classroom setting, in the relevant areas of learning and/or behavioural management. The success of the classroom support plan should be reviewed regularly, with appropriate parental involvement. If concern remains after a number of reviews and adaptations to the plan, the SET team in the school may be consulted about the desirability of intervention at stage II. While the class teacher is responsible for Stage I, they are encouraged to consult/confer with a member of the SET team at an early point in stage I so that available resources/screening tools/expertise may be optimally drawn on for the benefit of the child. Early communication between parent and teacher around concerns regarding a child's learning or general development is an important element of the process. The provision of classroom support is the responsibility of the class teacher.

2.3. Stage II - School Support

While the majority of children will have their needs met through whole school approaches and Classroom Support (All), some children require more targeted support. This involves the provision of additional targeted teaching and support in response to the SEN of small groups and/or individuals. This level of support includes the involvement of the SET. If the classroom support plan does not achieve the desired outcome the pupil should be referred to the SET team, with parental permission, for further assessment. If this assessment suggests that additional support would be beneficial, beyond the classroom level, this should be arranged as per available resources. The parents and the class teacher should be involved with the SET team in drawing up the learning programme, which would include appropriate interventions for implementation in the home, in the classroom, and during supplementary teaching. The SET and the class teacher should review regularly, in consultation with the parents, the rate of progress of each pupil receiving additional support. Following a period of intervention, some pupils may no longer require additional teaching support, some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive support. If significant concerns remain after a number of reviews and adaptations to the learning programme, then it may be necessary to provide interventions at stage III. In the case of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties, it is recognised that, with serious difficulties, more urgent action may be needed. In these cases, the pupil's needs should, with parental permission, be discussed with the relevant National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) psychologist and/or the case should be referred to the clinical services of the Health Services Executive. This may lead to a more detailed behavioural management programme to be implemented at home and in class, or to referral for further specialist assessment (Stage III). For example, children may be referred for Speech and Language Assessment through the HSE. No such referral is made without parental approval.

2.4. Stage III - School Support Plus

Children whose SEN are addressed at the level of School Support Plus (Few) are those with the greatest level of need. This may include children whose needs have been identified as significant and enduring, and those who have not responded to intervention as expected at the level of School Support (Some).

This level involves the provision of highly individualised, intensive, targeted, and additional teaching and support for children whose SEN are enduring, and significantly impact on their learning and participation in the school environment. This level of support includes the involvement of the SET.

Some pupils who continue to present with persistent, significant learning needs will require more intensive intervention at stage III. The school may formally request a consultation and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist outside the school in respect of pupils with learning difficulties or with mild or moderate behavioural problems (or both) who have not made progress after supplementary teaching or the implementation of a behavioural programme and in respect of pupils with serious emotional disturbance and/or behavioural problems. Such specialist advice may be sought from psychologists, paediatricians, speech and language therapists, audiologists, etc. The class teacher and member/s of the SET team, in consultation with the relevant specialist or specialists, should then draw up a learning programme that includes identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the programme. The parents are consulted as part of this process. This programme should be the subject of regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning programme and referral for specialist review, as necessary. In the case of pupils identified at an early age as having very significant SEN, intervention at stage III will be necessary on their entry to school. Support in the classroom will be an essential component of any learning programme devised for such pupils, and primary responsibility for the pupil will remain with the class teacher, in consultation with the SET team.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. Board of Management (BoM)

The overall responsibility for the provision of education to all children, including children with SEN, lies with the BoM. BoMs and principals are charged with specific duties in legislation.

Members of BoMs are advised to make themselves aware of the responsibilities of the BoM to make arrangements for inclusive education under the relevant education legislation. In the case of SET resources, the BoM recognises that this is an additional resource which is ring-fenced for the sole purpose of supporting children with SEN. The BoM must ensure that SET resources are used for their intended purpose only to support children with SEN in their school.

- The BoM oversees the development, implementation and review of school policy on SET.
- The BoM also ensures that adequate classroom accommodation, secure storage space and effective teaching resources are provided.

3.2. Principal

Guidelines for Primary Schools supporting children with Special Educational Needs p21 (Circular 64/2024) outlines that the principal has overall responsibility for SET procedures and practices in the school, and takes responsibility for establishing, promoting and implementing inclusive whole-school policies and procedures, which are supportive of the learning of all children, including those with SEN.

The principal:

- Ensures the development of inclusive whole school policies and procedures relating to children with SEN, and monitors and reviews their implementation.
- Oversees a whole school approach to assessment and screening to identify strengths, needs and interests.
- Ensures effective engagement with early learning and care settings and with post primary schools to support the transition of children with SEN.
- Deploys teachers who have the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding to SET roles.
- Ensures that systems are in place for effective collaboration between SET and classroom teachers for the sharing of relevant information on children's needs, to ensure continuity of provision for the children.
- Facilitates teacher professional learning (TPL) for all teachers in relation to whole school inclusive teaching and learning practices, and to the education of children with SEN.
- Encourages SETs to undertake the Postgraduate Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development for SETs that is available through a number of Higher Education Institutes.
- Ensures that all school staff, including class teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants (SNAs), are clearly informed of their roles and responsibilities.
- Provides opportunities for the sharing of specialist knowledge with school staff as part of promoting a whole school inclusive culture.
- Ensures that whole school procedures are established to facilitate the meaningful and effective involvement of parents/guardians, children and external professionals/agencies.
- Ensures that the School Provision Plan for Children with SEN (Appendix 1) is updated.
- Ensures that all children identified with SEN, who receive additional teaching support, have their needs documented in a Student Support File.
- Ensures that a Classroom/Student Support Plan is developed and contained within the Student Support File for all children identified at all levels of the Continuum of Support.
- Allocates time within the school timetable for the SET team to plan and consult with teachers and parents
- Meets with parents where appropriate regarding concerns about their child

The principal may delegate specific functions to other members of the staff, and may assign responsibility for coordinating additional support in the school to an identified teacher.

3.3. SEN Coordinator (SENCO)

The SENCO in the school may:

- Communicate with the principal in relation to SEN matters on an on-going basis
- Liaise with external agencies about the provision for pupils with additional needs. Liaise with the NEPS psychologist, the SET team and class teachers to prioritise children for psychological assessments (NEPS)
- Liaise with SET team to identify, support and monitor children with additional needs
- Co-ordinate regular SET team planning meetings to ensure effective communication and support for children with additional needs
- Communicate with the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO)
- Oversee Assistive Technology applications
- Collaborate with the SET team in creating timetables for additional support
- Meet with parents regarding concerns about their child, advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services and update them regarding their progress
- Co-ordinate the whole-school standardised testing at each class level
- Co-ordinate the screening of pupils for additional support, using the results of standardised tests
- Select children for external diagnostic assessment, where parental permission has been sought and granted
- Oversee the tracking system of test results on password-protected Aladdin software to monitor the progress of pupils
- Maintain lists of pupils who are receiving additional support

3.4. Class Teacher

Class teachers adapt their teaching approaches and methodologies, and make specific accommodations for children within the class, in response to concerns arising in relation to an individual child's progress, application, communication, emotional regulation, or interaction with peers. Class teachers have primary responsibility for the progress and care of all children in their classrooms, including children with SEN. Section 22 (1) of the Education Act 1998 states the primacy of the teacher in the education and personal development of children in schools. This requires targeted interventions to develop relevant skills related to these needs and to facilitate the meaningful inclusion of children with SEN. These include:

- Cooperative teaching and learning.
- Collaborative problem solving activities.
- Heterogeneous group work.
- Interventions to promote social and emotional development.
- Embedding digital technologies in teaching, learning and assessment.

Class teachers adapt their teaching, learning and assessment approaches for children with SEN. This can be achieved by, for example:

- Varying the structure, content, mode of instruction and pace of lessons to ensure the meaningful participation and engagement of all children
- Adapting lessons to take account of a child's interests.
- Matching tasks to the child's strengths, interests and needs.
- Adapting and utilising resources, including the use of visual supports, and technology.

The class teacher's duties include:

- Availing of relevant TPL, to develop capacity, knowledge and understanding of SEN.
- Using a variety of appropriate methodologies, activities, experiences and materials to cater for children's individual needs and to create a stimulating and supportive classroom environment.
- Collaborating with the principal, other teachers, parents/guardians and external professionals, as required, to support children with SEN to participate and engage in meaningful learning.
- Identifying children's strengths, interests, and priority learning needs, to inform the planning, implementation, assessment and regular review of intervention at each level of the Continuum of Support. Administering and correcting standardised tests of achievement in literacy and numeracy.
- Opening a Student Support File once additional needs have been identified and require classroom support.
- Developing Classroom Support Plans for children with emerging needs who require additional classroom-based support.
- Recording all actions and keeping copies of the Classroom Support Plan/s in the Student Support File.
- Supporting the development of Student Support Plans in collaboration with SET, parents/guardians, children, external professionals as required, in order to plan assessments, interventions, and to track children's progress at the levels of School Support (Some) and School Support Plus (Few). Meeting with parents when appropriate regarding concerns about their child and updating them regarding their progress.
- Ensuring that lessons are accessible through the use of a variety of approaches, including active learning, small-group tuition, individual teaching, and scaffolded instruction.
- Identifying and responding to the learning difficulties and learning preferences of children with SEN.
- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and adjust the class timetable to ensure that children in receipt of supplementary teaching will not be absent for the same subject/activity during each session.

3.5. Special Education Teacher (SET)

The SET provides additional teaching to children attending mainstream classes with SEN and should lead, model and ensure a high standard of provision. SETs should be familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources appropriate to meeting a variety of SEN. Teaching approaches include a combination of team-teaching initiatives, early intervention, small group and individual support. This may include a combination of in-class support and withdrawal of children (if appropriate).

The role of the SET includes:

- Contributing to the development of an inclusive school culture, demonstrated through ethos, values and inclusive school policies and practices.
- Promoting inclusive whole school preventative and proactive teaching and learning approaches.
- Developing inclusive school structures and systems in the organisation of provision for children with SEN.
- Leading in the identification and provision of support for children with SEN in the school context, using the Continuum of Support problem solving process.
- Liaising closely with the principal on the development, implementation and monitoring of whole school approaches to the education of children with SEN.
- Leading, in collaboration with the class teachers, on the development of Student Support Files and Student Support Plans for children with special educational needs who are identified in the School Provision Plan for Children with SEN at the levels of School Support (Some) and School Support Plus (Few).
- Collaborating, liaising and communicating with parents/guardians, the child, other relevant teachers and staff, the school principal and relevant others, as part of the problem solving process, maintaining a record of these meetings and decisions made.
- Engaging and collaborating with external agencies and services outside of the school as appropriate and necessary, and advising class teachers on procedures for availing of external SEN services.
- Planning to support transitions for children with SEN.
- Using evidence-informed teaching and learning approaches to support the SEN of children, and monitoring response to intervention.
- Sharing relevant information, regarding the SEN of children, with class teachers to support their meaningful engagement and participation in lessons.
- Advising and supporting class teachers where needed.
- Engaging in TPL to upskill and develop the knowledge, competencies and skills required for high quality provision of support for children with SEN
- Reflecting on individual professional practice, including teaching and learning approaches, to enhance provision.
- Preparing and planning on a weekly basis in order to address each child's specific needs as reflected in support plan targets.

The SET teacher should:

- Familiarise themselves with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of need
- Assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies aimed at prevention and early intervention
- Meet with class teachers, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support and School Support Plus
- Meet twice a year with class teachers, relevant staff and parents to review Support Files
- Update and maintain planning and progress records for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of school support
- Provide supplementary teaching for literacy and numeracy on a withdrawal and in-class support basis
- Support whole-school procedures for screening administer and interpret diagnostic tests and inform class teachers and parents of the outcomes
- Meet with parents where appropriate regarding concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress. A balanced approach will inform communication approaches, bearing in mind the overall needs of all pupils..
- Discuss the needs and progress of children on their caseload at planning meetings
- Provide necessary information to a SEN pupil's receiving school once a transfer letter has been received

3.6. Special Needs Assistant (SNA)

Circular 32/2025 outlines arrangements for the allocation of special needs assistant (SNA) support to mainstream classes in primary schools for the 2025/26 school year. Refer to our school's SNA Deployment Policy- available at www.sstreasa.ie

3.7. Parents/Guardians

Collaboration and sharing of relevant information between home and school are essential elements of our SEN policy. Parents/Guardians through their unique knowledge of their own children have much to contribute to their child's learning. Parent/Guardian should:

- Share any information, reports, or reports pending from health professionals, and/or concerns regarding their child's development. Copies of professional reports should be provided to the school at the enrolment stage (where available).
- Support the work of the school and keep the class teacher informed of the progress and challenges they observe in their child's learning
- Attend meetings arranged by the class teacher or SET team
- Support the targets outlined in their child's support plans and engage in all suggested home-based activities
- Inform the post-primary school of their child's needs, at the transition stage
- If a parent refuses supplementary teaching for their child, the Principal is informed. A written record of the refusal should be kept in the school.

3.8. Pupils

- The right of the child to express their views in all matters affecting them is central to the collaborative special education process. Children should be provided with the age-appropriate opportunities and assistance to realise this right.

Pupils who are in receipt of supplementary teaching should, as appropriate:

- Be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of the medium and short-term learning targets
- Become familiar with the targets that have been set for them
- Develop 'ownership' of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills to improve their own learning
- Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment.

4. Assessment and Screening

4.1. Assessment Methods

Assessment is part of what a class teacher does on a daily basis for all children. Teachers are constantly gathering information about children's overall progress. Some of this is on an informal (yet nonetheless valuable) basis such as through teacher observation and interaction and dialogue with pupils and parents. Some methods of assessment include self-assessment, questioning, teacher observation, portfolios of work and teacher-designed tasks and tests. The information gathered enables the teacher to plan learning experiences based on the appropriate objectives from the curriculum. In order to identify pupils who may require supplementary teaching, screening; including standardised testing, is carried out in all classes annually and further diagnostic testing may need to take place. Such information informs our future planning and deployment of supplementary teaching resources.

4.2. Screening and Standardised Tests

Class-specific assessment and screening procedures in Scoil San Treasa include - but are not limited to - the following tests and profiling tools:

- **Junior Infants:** Children are assessed at three points in the school year using the 'Assessing Letter & Phonemic Awareness Class Assistant' (ALPACA) early literacy assessment tool. When the class teacher considers that a child is not making adequate progress, a consultation takes place with parents. With parental permission, the Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP), for example, may be administered. Work samples, checklists and teacher observation (May Screening) are also used to consider the attainment/progress of pupils in Junior Infants.
- **Senior Infant Level:** Children are again assessed at three points in the school year using the ALPACA early literacy assessment tool. The Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) may be administered by the class teacher or SET at the end of the fifth term of schooling i.e. the end of the second term of senior infants. The Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy (DTEL), a screening and diagnostic assessment of reading and related skills, is used in the third term of Senior Infants. Similarly, the Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy (DTEN) is administered in May.
- **First Class:** The class teacher uses various checklists and screening measures - including the QUEST Screening (Number and Reading) in September. The Drumcondra Standardised Tests are administered in May as a screening test, i.e. the primary purpose of these tests is to identify pupils who may be at risk of difficulties so that further assessment can be carried out and their needs addressed. The outcome of the child's screening test at first class level is presented in one of the following three 'descriptors' - criterion reached; approaching criterion; criterion not reached. The PM Benchmark Literacy Assessment is used to identify children's reading levels and inform practice.
- **Second to Sixth Class:** DPRT (Drumcondra Primary Reading Test), DPMT (Drumcondra Primary Mathematics Test) and DPST (Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test) are administered online to all children, other than those who are exempted. Cognitive Ability Tests may be used in overall assessment on a case by case basis, with pilot initiatives underway in our school to administer such tests at whole-class level to inform further planning around teaching, learning and related interventions. The WIAT II is a standardised academic achievement test used to measure academic achievement in reading, mathematics, written language, and oral language. The Accelerated Reader programme is also used as a literacy development tool. The STAR reading assessment is used to measure reading comprehension and skills.

5. SEN Teaching Resources in Scoil San Treasa

5.1. Allocation of Special Education Teachers (SETs) to Scoil San Treasa

Circular 64/2024 provides guidelines and principles for the deployment and management of SET resources to support inclusive education for students with SEN in primary schools, and promotes a whole-school approach to inclusion. Eight core principles guide the implementation of inclusive practices, including collaboration, proactive support, and the child's right to express views in decision-making. It is a child centered and needs based approach.

As per **Circular 0004/2025**, a unique educational profile is created for each school and is underpinned by three pillars.

- **Pillar 1:** Enrolment Allocation - The total enrolment in the school which is sourced from Primary Online Database (POD)
- **Pillar 2:** Educational Teaching Needs Profile – This is derived from the literacy and numeracy profile of the school as demonstrated by the STen scores (1, 2, 3, and 4) for English/Irish and Maths reported by the school. Please Note: Pupils who are exempt are not recorded under STen 1. Exempt pupils are captured automatically from the exempt flag.
- **Pillar 3:** Educational Disadvantage –The key data source is the Pobal HP Index for Small Areas, which is a method of measuring the relative affluence or disadvantage of a particular geographical area, combined with pupil data from POD.

The total allocation for each school is based on the sum of the 3 individual pillars which is then rounded to the nearest 2.5 hrs. The educational profile of each school is now updated annually and SET allocations are advised to schools as part of the staffing arrangements circular and each school is provided with additional detail on their allocation by email from the NCSE at the earliest possible date each year.

5.2. Deployment of supplementary teaching resources

“The allocation model provides a greater level of autonomy for schools in how to manage and deploy additional teaching support based on the special educational needs of children and young people, rather than solely based on diagnosis of disability” (DE Circular 64/2024).

- A central aspect of the revised allocation model is that additional teaching supports are deployed according to identified needs, rather than being based on a diagnosis of disability. Children with the greatest level of need will have access to the greatest level of support. The school has the autonomy and flexibility to decide how best to deploy the resources they have.
- At the end of a school year and at the outset of the following school year, planning takes place at school level with a view to optimally deploying available teaching resources to address the needs of the school.
- All pupils in need of additional teaching support are identified. Needs around early prevention and early intervention are also considered. This includes information gleaned from teacher observation, standardised tests, diagnostic tests, professional reports (e.g. educational psychologist, speech and language therapist, occupational therapist), and parents.
- The caseload for supplementary teaching will be coordinated by the SENCO in consultation with the principal. This may be reviewed and adjusted in the course of the year as needs emerge and change over time.

5.3. Prioritising Students for Additional Teaching Support

Teachers in all mainstream primary school settings use a range of assessment and intervention approaches to identify and meet a child's educational needs. Teachers and children engage in ongoing assessment activities as part of normal classroom practice that can be either formative or summative in nature. Schools use a range of assessment methods for formative or summative purposes which emphasise the interlinked and complementary nature of the assessment process.

The following groups may be prioritised when considering allocating additional support for children:

- Children with complex needs who access HSE Children Disability Services and/or those who have been assessed as qualifying for access to the Disability Services, but who have yet to receive services.
- Children who score at or below the 15th percentile in standardised tests will be prioritised for support.
- Pupils in senior infants and first class (in line with our focus on early prevention and intervention)
- In line with our School Improvement Plan for literacy and Numeracy, to further support inclusion at class level, and to facilitate access to additional support for a greater number of pupils (including pupils with exceptional ability), part of our allocation of additional teaching support is specifically directed towards in-class support across the class levels.
- It is not usual practice that pupils in Junior Infants are withdrawn for supplementary teaching unless there is a clearly defined need of a complex nature.

Thereafter, a number of considerations are borne in mind regarding prioritising access to additional support, including: relative scores in standardised tests, history of accessing supplementary teaching or lack of same, acute nature of need as per staged approach, learning patterns in evidence to date. Supports are allocated in line with the current needs and capacity of the school.

5.4. Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies

In view of the substantial international evidence that early-intervention and prevention programmes can lead to improved outcomes for pupils, Scoil San Treasa promotes a policy of early prevention and intervention in order to minimise the risk of development of learning, social and emotional difficulties and to optimally address such needs where they are manifest. Additional teaching resources are deployed in junior classes. Our current staffing allocation (teachers) allows us to direct some time to in-class support and to a significant degree in the infant classes. This reflects the Staffing Schedule for our school and also reflects the importance attached to early prevention and early intervention.

5.5. Organisation of Additional Teaching Support

- In terms of the organisation of support, one-to-one, group teaching, in-class support or a combination of those types of support may be decided upon by the school. The level and nature of intervention will be determined by the pupils' learning needs, the feasibility of combining pupils across various groups in response to their needs, and the available teaching resources and teaching spaces.
- Ongoing review and reflection on overall practice, interventions and outcomes inform future planning. Following a period of intervention, some pupils may no longer require additional teaching support, some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive support.
- Parents will be informed and permission sought where specific intervention involving withdrawal from the classroom is planned. (See section on Staged Approach above).
- Prior to a child being offered support intervention, it is the class teacher who will alert parent/s to the perceived difficulty the child may be experiencing and to the concerns re progress.
- The class teacher will discuss the child's progress with parents.
- The class teacher will explain why the child is being considered for further testing and/or supplementary teaching with the SET team.
- A member of the SET team will meet with parents to discuss the child's progress and possible intervention programmes.
- Parental involvement is deemed to be of central importance in implementing any such programme. Discussion with and feedback from parents will be used to inform the Student support file planning process (see below).
- Parents will be kept informed of progress in the specific area/s of difficulty with respect to supplementary teaching input.
- If a parent refuses supplementary teaching for their child, the Principal is informed. A written record of the refusal should be kept in the school.
- A balanced approach will inform communication approaches, bearing in mind the overall needs of all pupils.
- Broadly speaking, the school year is divided into two instructional terms: September - late January; late January/early February - June. While ongoing planning and review is central to our approach to supplementary teaching, there is a particular focus on planning/review at the beginning and end of these instructional terms.
- Depending on a variety of factors including individual need, relative needs throughout the school, progress made to date and overall resources available, pupils may/may not continue to avail of supplementary teaching in following instructional term/s and/or for an entire instructional term.

6. Planning and Record Keeping

6.1. Student Support Files

The Student Support File provides a process for recording and collating all information in relation to the child, in order to plan interventions aligned to their identified strengths, interests and needs, and to facilitate the documentation of their response to intervention. It tracks a child's pathway through the Continuum of Support and guides which supports and evidence informed interventions are most appropriate. The Student Support File holds all the information regarding the additional support provided to the child. This includes: • Log of actions • Relevant information gathered to develop understanding of strengths, interests and needs • Student Support Plans that are developed and monitored over time • Information on attendance • Interventions, accommodations and other supports • Records of consultations • Details of reviews and response to intervention • Copies of professional reports and/or correspondence relevant to supporting the child at school. • Copies of relevant information from preschool settings, including Mo Scéal • Records of relevant communications with parents/guardians and the child.

6.2. Support Plans

Many different types of plans can be support plans. A support plan can take the form of a general plan for support, a behavioural plan or contract, an individual learning profile, an individual educational plan, a personalised learning plan.

- **Classroom Support Plan:** A Classroom Support Plan is a simple plan that outlines the child's SEN and the actions, including individualised teaching and management approaches, which will be taken to meet the child's needs. The plan may also include home based actions to be taken by the child's parents/guardians to support their child's development. When a class teacher's concerns suggest that a student has distinct and individual needs, the class teacher, in consultation with parent(s) will draw up a Classroom Support Plan which is implemented for an agreed time span.
- **School Support Plan:** In some cases, interventions at Classroom Support level are not sufficient to fully meet the student's educational needs. In such circumstances a School Support Plan may be needed. Information gathering for the purpose of identification of needs at School Support (Some) is a collaborative process, led by the SET, and involving the class teacher, parents/guardians, and the child. The identification of individual strengths and needs at this level may be informed by the processes of formal and informal assessment.
- **School Support Plus Plan:** Children whose SEN are addressed at the level of School Support Plus (Few) are those with the greatest level of need. This may include children whose needs have been identified as significant and enduring, and those who have not responded to intervention as expected at the level of School Support (Some). Children with the greatest level of need require access to highly structured and individualised evidence-informed interventions. This may include adapted environments and teaching approaches, which promote independence, engagement, social skills, personal care and success in learning. The focus should be on quality educational and skills-based interventions to maximise opportunities for participation and engagement in learning and in the life of the school and community. The child's strengths and interests should be a key consideration when developing interventions. The School Support Plus process will be initiated if, in reviewing the Support Plan, it is agreed that the student is not making adequate progress, despite purposeful efforts. This process will generally involve external professionals and support services in a more detailed problem solving process. It is expected that the students who are receiving support at the level of School Support Plus, will be those with greatest need. A School Support Plus plan will be drawn up outlining learning targets for the child.
- **Personal Pupil Plan:** Students accessing SNA support require a Personal Pupil Plan (PPP) or Additional Care Needs Plan outlining the pupil's care needs.

6.3. Record keeping

Appropriate records are kept by class teacher and SET, in line with the nature of needs as per the staged approach and school protocols. Guided by the relevant teacher, the SNA staff may assist with a communication journal, where warranted and appropriate. End-of-year pupil reports are completed by the class teacher (in consultation with the SET as appropriate), while the SET provides additional end-of-year 'comments and observations' re. pupils at school support/school support plus level. Student Support Files are stored and updated on Aladdin.

7. Engagement with External Agencies

7.1. NCSE, SENO, OIDE (Oide is the Department of Education support service for schools), NEPS

In seeking to address the needs of pupils as effectively as possible, Scoil San Treasa engages with a range of external agencies. These include NEPS, the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), with whom the school liaises directly through the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO). The school also works with the Health Service Executive (HSE), for example through Speech and Language Therapists, and with the Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT), who may engage directly with pupils and also participate in professional discussions with staff. In addition, agencies such as the NCSE Support Service/OIDE may provide professional development opportunities for individual teachers and/or the whole staff.

7.2. National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

- On a yearly basis schools may or may not be allocated the services of a NEPS Psychologist. NEPS will support our school via the NEPS advisory support line, a telephone support for schools that are temporarily without an assigned psychologist. NEPS continues to support schools in the event of a critical incident.
- If concern remains after intervention and additional support from the teacher and SET team, the school may advise a consultation and/or assessment of the pupil's need through NEPS or with another relevant external service. Such consultations/assessments are dependent on available resources and require parental permission in line with NEPS protocols and procedures at that time and protocols/procedures relating to other agencies/services as may be relevant.
- It is usual practice that the overall learning needs in our school are regularly reviewed with a view to supporting pupils' learning as best we can with resources that may be available. A number of supports are available to schools to help us to enhance the learning of children with whom we work. NEPS is one such support.
- A generalised and routine planning meeting/consultation with NEPS (around lots of pupils, on an unnamed basis) takes place intermittently in the school, typically in the first term. Such meetings, together with concerns that may emerge or escalate in the course of the school year or over time, form a key part of the process of prioritising pupils for consideration for a formal consultation/assessment with NEPS.
- Following discussion/s between school personnel and parents regarding pupils who are prioritised, a formal consultation/consultation and assessment with NEPS may follow (subject to available resources), if parents wish to avail of this service and if they consent to the same, as per NEPS protocols and procedures at that time.
- As needs emerge further support/input may be sought from NEPS - in consideration of the overall needs of the school and available resources. (Access to/engagement with NEPS is dependent also on resources available at the time/over time).

7.3. Transfer to Post-primary and other Transitions

Transitions have been identified as a significant risk factor to the wellbeing of children with SEN. This includes transitions from preschool to primary school, from primary school to post-primary school, as well as transitions within and across the school setting. Supporting smooth transitions in the school, such as transitions between special education teaching and mainstream class settings, is very important for fostering wellbeing at school.

- Good planning and support for transition helps to ensure the successful transfer of pupils from pre-school to primary school, from primary school to post-primary school and between special and mainstream settings. In Scoil San Treasa, we acknowledge that effective transition support and planning can enhance the educational experience of the child and help reduce potential anxiety.
- In line with our current Admission Policy, parents are required to advise the school of their child's SEN well in advance. (Please refer directly to our current Admission Policy).
- It is the duty of the parents of the pupil(s) with SEN to inform the post-primary school of their child's needs. Information on all children in 6th class is transferred to the relevant post-primary school using the DES transfer form/s in use at that time. In consultation with parents, this may be supplemented by a Transition Support document.
- Transition to post-primary school can be a challenging time for pupils and may necessitate additional support prior to the transition, at the point of transition and in the early stages of the same. Preparation for transition to post-primary school is a feature of our SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) programme for all pupils in the senior cycle in Scoil San Treasa, and is reflected in pupil Support Plans targets as needs determine.

8. Professional Development for teachers/staff

In line with available resources, Continued Professional Development (CPD) is encouraged and staff are alerted to opportunities as they arise. Sharing of best practice is actively encouraged within the school and a bank of teacher reference material is maintained and developed on an ongoing basis. A bank of key resources (e.g. professional material) is available to teachers. Access is routinely made available to relevant digital material through our ICT network. Teachers should consult directly with the SEN team for such resources.

9. Relevant Policies

- Health and Safety
- Administration of Medicine
- Code of Behaviour
- SNA Deployment
- Assessment
- Admission
- Child Safeguarding
- Data Protection

10. Legal Framework

The policy is informed by the relevant legislation regarding pupils with SEN. This legislation includes the following:

- Education Act (1998)
- Education Welfare Act (2000)
- Equal Status Act (2000)
- Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill (2003)
- Equality Act (2004)
- Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998 and 2003) GDPR 2018
- Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)

11. References

- NCSE Relate A Regulation-First Approach to Reframing Behaviour and Supporting Student Engagement and Participation (NCSE 2025)
- Learning Support Guidelines, (DE 2024)
- Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers (DES, NEPS, 2007)
- Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of Support - Resource Pack for Teachers (DES, NEPS, 2007)
- 'Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life' - The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020
- Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools - Guidelines for Primary Schools (DE, 2024)
- DE Circulars 0064/2024 and 0004/2025

12. Implementation and Review

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in September 2017. It was reviewed again in March 2021 and in March 2026.

Signed: *Eoin O'Neill – Chairperson, Board of Management* Date: *11th March 2026*

Eoin O'Neill – Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: *Frances Mullin – Principal, Scoil San Treasa*

Date: *11th March 2026*

Frances Mullin – Principal, Scoil San Treasa



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Guidelines for Primary Schools

Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes

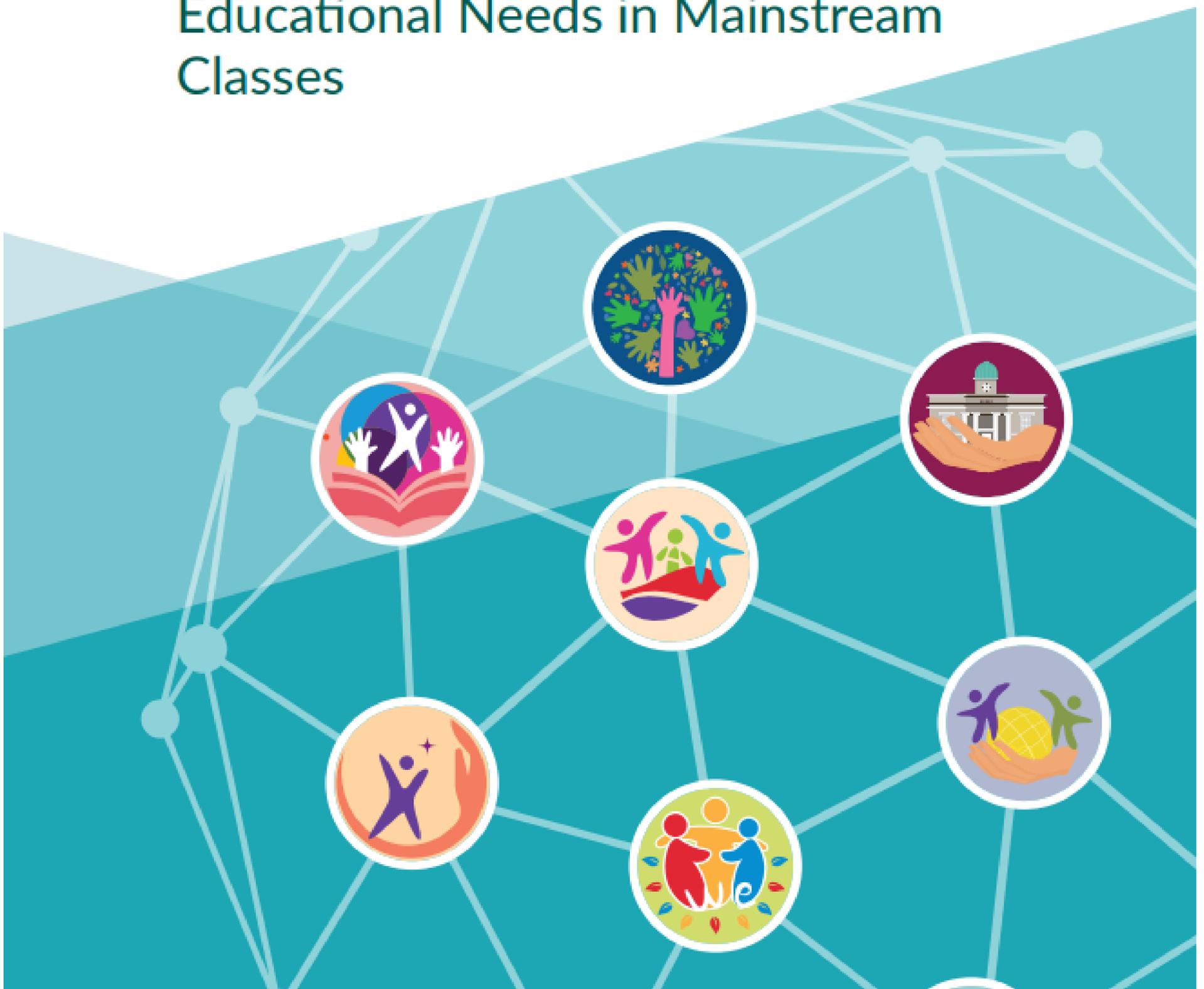




An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Indicators of Effective Practice for Primary Schools

Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes





An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Indicators of Effective Practice - Section 3

Examples - Student Support Files for Primary Schools



Appendix D: Differentiation Overview

1. Introduction

Children learn in different ways and at different rates. Pupils also bring different strengths, interests, experiences, and learning styles to the classroom. In order to meet these diverse needs within a mainstream classroom, teachers must differentiate teaching and learning activities.

Differentiation ensures that all pupils can access the curriculum and participate meaningfully in learning activities appropriate to their level of ability and attainment.

In line with the **Department of Education and Skills (DES, 2017) Guidelines for Primary Schools Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools**, teachers are encouraged to use a range of teaching approaches and methodologies to ensure learning is accessible to all pupils.

2. Aims of the Differentiation Policy

The aim of this policy is to:

- Support all pupils in accessing the curriculum
- Provide appropriate learning opportunities for pupils of varying abilities
- Promote inclusive teaching practices within the classroom
- Ensure that pupils experience success and motivation in their learning
- Provide guidance for teachers in planning and implementing differentiated instruction

3. Principles of Differentiation

Effective differentiation is based on the following principles:

Manageable: Learning tasks should be appropriate to the pupil's level of ability and understanding.

Achievable: Tasks should enable pupils to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and understanding.

Motivating: Learning activities should promote confidence, engagement, and a sense of achievement.

4. Understanding Different Learning Styles

Pupils learn in a variety of ways and benefit from different teaching approaches.

For example:

- Some pupils learn best through visual supports such as diagrams, maps, lists, topic webs, or charts.
- Some pupils have strong auditory skills and learn best through listening, discussion, and verbal explanation.
- Others benefit from demonstrations and practical activities, learning by observing or actively engaging in tasks.

Teachers should therefore incorporate a variety of teaching methods to support these different learning styles.

5. Approaches to Differentiation

Differentiation may be achieved by:

1. Adjusting the **level, pace, and structure** of lessons
2. Adapting lessons to reflect **pupil interests**
3. Matching tasks to **pupil ability levels**
4. Using a variety of teaching methodologies including:
 - Active learning
 - Group work
 - Pair work
 - Individual instruction
5. Adapting learning resources
6. Incorporating **ICT and digital technologies**
7. Setting **appropriate and achievable learning outcomes**
8. Providing environmental supports where necessary

6. Planning for Differentiation

Effective differentiation requires careful planning. Teachers should:

1. Identify the topic and content to be taught.
2. Establish clear learning objectives for the majority of pupils.
3. Plan how the lesson will be organised and delivered.
4. Identify pupils who may require additional support or extension.
5. Prepare necessary adaptations in advance.
6. Deliver the lesson while monitoring pupil progress.
7. Adjust instruction where necessary during the lesson.
8. Provide additional support where required.
9. Assess learning based on the identified objectives.

7. Differentiation of Curriculum Content

Differentiation may involve adapting curriculum content to suit pupils' needs.

For example:

- Pupils experiencing learning difficulties may cover reduced or simplified material.
- Tasks may be adapted to make them more manageable and achievable.
- More able pupils may explore content in greater depth or complexity.
- Homework tasks may also be differentiated to support pupils of varying abilities.

8. Differentiation by Resource

Teachers may adapt resources to support learning by:

- Simplifying language
- Providing visual supports such as illustrations or diagrams
- Removing unnecessary detail
- Providing prompts or cues
- Using ICT and digital tools to enhance access to learning

9. Differentiation by Instruction

Instruction may be adapted through a variety of strategies including:

- Providing more or less teacher support
- Re-teaching concepts using simpler language or additional examples
- Asking questions at different levels of difficulty
- Adjusting the pace of instruction
- Allowing additional time for certain pupils
- Monitoring pupils' work more closely where necessary
- Providing extension work for pupils who require additional challenge

Instructions may be presented in different ways, including:

- Written instructions
- Verbal explanations
- Demonstrations
- Visual supports
- Audio or video materials

Teachers may also:

- Model tasks
- Provide examples of completed work
- Break instructions into smaller steps
- Highlight key words
- Allow thinking time before response
- Ask pupils to repeat instructions to ensure understanding.

10. Differentiation by Task

Tasks may be differentiated by:

- Providing activities at different levels of difficulty
- Modifying materials while maintaining similar tasks
- Allowing pupils to work on different aspects of a topic
- Designing activities that reflect pupils' interests and strengths
- Providing experiential or practical learning opportunities where appropriate

11. Differentiation by Grouping

A variety of grouping strategies may be used to support differentiation, including:

- Whole-class teaching
- Mixed-ability groups
- Ability groups (used carefully to avoid negative impact on pupil self-esteem)
- Pair work
- Individual work
- Peer tutoring or buddy systems

Teachers will also consider seating arrangements to ensure pupils who require additional support can clearly see and hear instructions.

Group work can:

- Encourage collaborative learning
- Promote problem solving among pupil
- Increase motivation and engagement
- Encourage active participation.

12. Differentiation by Outcome

Pupils may demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways. Open-ended tasks allow pupils to respond at different levels of complexity.

Alternative methods of recording work may include:

- ICT or digital presentations
- Cloze procedures
- Sentence completion
- Writing frames
- Topic webs or tables
- True/False or Yes/No responses
- Matching exercises
- Sequencing activities
- Drawings or diagrams
- Oral responses
- Audio recordings
- Dictated responses

These approaches allow pupils to demonstrate understanding in ways that suit their abilities and learning preferences.