

Section 5



Advice and Guidance

5.3 The Role of the SENCO

The SENCO plays a central role in ensuring that every learner feels included and has the opportunity to reach their full potential. For the SENCO to be as effective as possible, the responsibility for SEND provision must be shared, with every leader a leader of SEND and every teacher a teacher of learners with SEND.

- Foreword SENCO Induction Pack NASEN

"It has really made a difference planning with my son's SENCo. I think he understands my son more now and I understand what the school are working on. It has given me more confidence."

- South Glos Parent/Carer

SENCO Key Roles

The importance of this challenging and highly rewarding role in schools has been reiterated in the 2015 SEN Code of Practice. Each school is required to have a nominated SENCO who must also be a qualified teacher. All staff and parents must know who the nominated SENCO is. The SENCOs day-to-day role will reflect the phase, type and size of the school, the key roles of a SENCO are:

- Advising on and influencing the strategic development of a person-centred and inclusive ethos, policies, priorities and practices;
- Promoting a whole school culture of high expectations and best practice in teaching and learning to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Contributing to the strategic development of SEN and disability provision;
- Overseeing the day to day operation (and periodic review) of the school's SEN policy;
- Co-ordinating, tracking progress and evaluating the impact of the provision being made for learners with SEN;
- Ensuring the full inclusion of SEN learners within the school community and access to the school's curriculum, facilities and extra-curricular activities;
- Leading the professional development of staff so that all staff improve their practice and take responsibility for removing barriers to participation and learning;

The South Glos Way: A SEND and inclusion toolkit for South Gloucestershire education settings and professionals

- Deploying and managing staff effectively to ensure the most efficient use of resources to improve progress of children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Drawing on external sources of support and expertise to promote, facilitate and support effective multi-agency working for all children and young people with SEN, through e.g. person-centred planning, 'team around a child or family', the Common Assessment Framework and the Education, Health and Care
- Develop, implement, monitor and evaluate systems to:
 - o Identify pupils who may have SEN and/or disabilities;
 - o Inform all staff about the learning needs, emotional, social and mental health needs and achievement of children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Deploying the SEN budget and reporting on how it is spent;
- Reporting on the progress of children and young people with SEN.

There is an element of bureaucracy involved in SEN coordination and access to administrative support is important to allow the SENCO to focus on the core and specialist aspects of the role.

SENCO Leading Teaching and Learning

The provision of high quality teaching for children with special educational needs and disability is not a matter for the SENCO alone; all teachers are teachers of children and young people with additional educational needs. .

The SENCO, often working collaboratively with a school's teaching and learning lead will provide professional guidance to colleagues with the aim of securing high quality teaching of learners with SEN.

This could include:

- Leading best practice in the teaching and learning of CYP with SEN. This may include: modelling effective practice; supporting teachers in identifying barriers to learning; advice and support with planning; support with curriculum access
- Support leadership and development of staff through coaching and mentoring
- Support trainee and newly qualified teachers
- Lead induction for new members of staff
- Plan and deliver continuing professional development to build knowledge, skill set and capacity within the school

SENCo as Leader

The SENCO has an important role to play with the Headteacher and governing body, in determining the strategic development of SEN policy and provision in the school. They will be most effective in that role if they are part of the school leadership team.

- 0-25 SEND Code of Practice (2015, 6.87)

It is recommended that SENCOs are members of the school's senior leadership team in schools. The SENCO's position on the SLT should be to advise and guide in the strategic development of the school, ensuring its compliance with the laws which govern accessible and inclusive provision within the school. The National SENCO Workload Survey (Curran, et al.2018), reported that often SENCOs had additional roles and responsibilities within a senior leadership team, often without additional time. This can lead to SENCO's not being effective in their core duties.

SENCO qualifications

There is a legal requirement that every new SENCO in a mainstream school, if employed after September 2009, must have completed the National Award for SEN Co-ordination (NASENCO) within three years of being in post. The Education (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) (England) Regulations 2014 further prescribes the qualifications and experience the nominated SENCO must hold. The National Award for SEN Coordination has nationally agreed learning outcomes and it is recommended that even SENCOs who are not new to the role consider studying for the award (which can contribute towards a Masters' degree).

SENCO as advocate

The SENCo should have a strategic overview of the policy and practice in their setting. They should be able to:

- articulate the vision for inclusion in their setting
- articulate how values are shared across the setting
- model and demonstrate their commitment to the principles of inclusion 'The South Glos Way'

A Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator should inspire inclusive practice in his/her school to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people. They will have a strategic overview of the policy and practice in their setting and will advise and support teachers and other staff on the best ways to ensure that all children or young people in their classes are making sufficient progress. It is however class teachers who have overall responsibility for children and young people's progress.

SENCO as researcher

In March 2020, the Educational Endowment Foundation released its guidance report on Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools. The report made five key recommendations which should be the focus for school improvement:

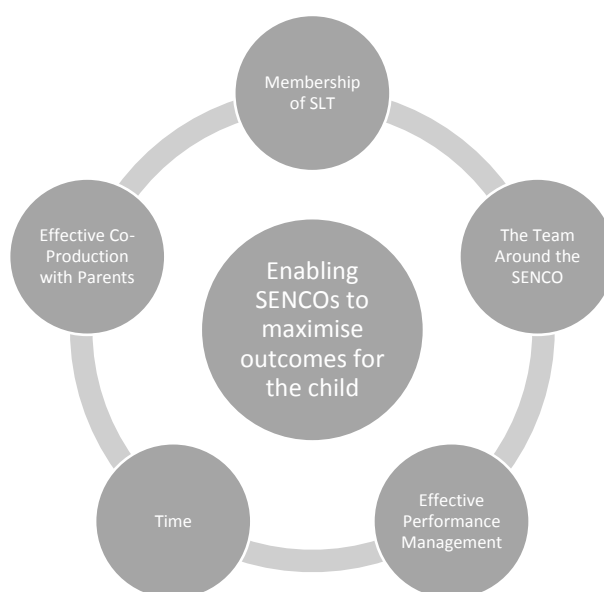
- Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils, without exception
- Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs
- Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching
- Complement high quality teaching with carefully selected small-group and one-to-one interventions
- Work effectively with teaching assistants

The full report can be accessed [here](#).

Where schools have an unremitting focus on high quality teaching and learning and SENCOs lead on evidenced informed interventions, which are co-ordinated and deployed effectively, South Glos schools through SENCo network meetings and SEND Clusters show good progress for CYP with SEND

As part of the suite of Whole School SEND materials 'Effective SENCO Deployment' takes the five key themes seen below generated by the National SENCO Workload Survey (Curran, et al. 2018) in order to assist school leaders to identify how their SENCO might be deployed more effectively.

This guide may support SENCO's and their line managers in reviewing and evaluating how they are deployed.



The Five Key Themes to help Maximise the Impact of the SENCO

Further Guidance and Support

Whole School SEND [Review Suite](#). Contains:

- Demonstrating Inclusion Tool
- Effective SENCO deployment
- Preparing for Adulthood from the Earliest Years
- SEND Reflection Framework
- Teaching Assistant Deployment Guide
- Early Years SEND Review Guide
- SEND Governance Review Guide

[SENCO Induction Pack](#) from Nasen.