

# Every teacher is a teacher of SEND

**By Chris Rossiter**

You will probably have heard the phrase ‘every teacher is a teacher of SEND’, but what does this actually mean?

Well the SEND Code of Practice makes the following statements:

Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff.

High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching.

Knowing that the phrase stems from SEND legislation doesn’t make it any more meaningful. To me, what it means, is that in your classroom – whatever classroom that is; Early Years, primary, secondary, PE with Year Three first thing on Monday or Science with Year 11 last thing on Friday – you are likely to have learners in your class with an identified special educational need and they deserve access to your expertise and teaching as much as the next learner. This module will support you in teaching this cohort, and I’ll tell you more about that in a moment. But first, let’s look at the prevalence of SEND in a little more detail.

Now the proportion of school-aged children with an identified special educational need or disability changes each year, but there are some broad trends that you should be aware of. Over the past ten years, there has been a substantial reduction in the number of learners recorded as having SEND. In particular, there was a significant drop around 2015 when the Code of Practice was introduced and some of the definitions changed. Over the past few years though, numbers have been more or less stable, if anything rising slightly.

That is for all SEND, but there are two categories that learners with SEND will fall into: those learners who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and those who receive SEN Support. The latter group – those on SEN Support - is significantly bigger than the EHCP group.

An important thing for you to know, is that eight out of ten pupils with an identified SEND, that’s those with an EHCP *and* those receiving SEN support, are in mainstream schools. They are not in special schools, they are in regular primary and secondary schools, and you will be teaching them. Every teacher is a teacher of SEND!

This module will give you more detail on some of the things I have mentioned like EHCPs and the Code of Practice. More importantly though, it will help you work through the practicalities of ‘every teacher being a teacher of SEND. You will learn that pupils are likely to learn at different rates and require different levels and types of support from teachers to succeed, and that seeking to understand these differences is an essential part of teaching, and in many cases, working with others is an important part of this process. You will also learn that maintaining high expectations for all pupils is critical to ensure that children meet their potential. In summary, you will learn, to be a teacher of SEND.

