

EARLY YEARS

SEND Review Guide



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INTRODUCTION TO THE SEND REVIEW GUIDE SUITE

Whole School SEND is dedicated to ensuring that every child, young person and young adult with SEND can achieve their very best, with the skills, experiences and qualifications that they need for a successful transition into adulthood. A key principle underpinning the work of Whole School SEND is the commitment to improving provision for SEND through collaboration, reflection and evidence-based practice.

The benefits of self-evaluation, peer review and reflective practice are widely known and well understood. However, the successful implementation of these approaches can be challenging to achieve in practice. For this reason, Whole School SEND hosts a suite of freely-available SEND review guides that act as a scaffold to support the effective reviewing of SEND at a range of levels from strategic leadership through to individual practitioners.

The intention is for SEND reviews to act as a catalyst for driving change and improving provision, so it is common for reviews to lead to an action plan. The suite of SEND review guides includes:

- SEND Review Guide
- Effective SENCo Deployment Guide
- Every Leader a Leader of SEND
- Preparing for Adulthood from the Earliest Years Review Guide
- SEND Reflection Framework
- Teaching Assistant Deployment Review Guide
- MAT SEND Review Guide
- Early Years SEND Review Guide
- SEND Governance Review Guide
- College SEND Review Guide

We recognise that every school or setting is individual and may require a tailored version of the SEND reviews. Therefore, the entire suite of SEND review guides are available in an editable format from the Whole School SEND website – <https://www.wholeschoolsend.org.uk/page/wss-review-guides>.

We very much hope that this suite of SEND review guides is useful in providing a framework of support and challenge to make a difference to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Annamarie Hassall MBE
Chief Executive Officer

Amanda Wright
Head of Whole School SEND





INTRODUCTION TO THE EARLY YEARS REVIEW GUIDE

The Early Years SEND Review Guide was developed for Early Years practitioners and reviewers, to support the review and development of inclusive provision and practice. It is designed for use in early years settings and is relevant to all providers whether working in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) or maintained sector.

At nasen, we believe that all children benefit from an inclusive, whole setting approach; we must aspire to ensure all children have the best possible start in their earliest years, providing the foundations for a happy, fulfilling life, to make friends, succeed at school and beyond.

Studies show that children with SEND often miss out on the experience of a high-quality early education. This happens for many reasons, such as confidence of parents and carers or practitioners.

In relaunching this Early Years SEND Review guide, the aim is to help EY practitioners and leaders better understand what inclusive practice looks like, identifying strengths and areas for development.

The process and framework provide consistency, but this guide is designed to be used flexibly, acknowledging the wide range of settings, their starting points and variable progress. This flexibility will enable practitioners and reviewers to assess, plan, do, review when considering their own practice. Successful implementation includes development of action plans, relevant to their context, which are right for their setting.

Together we can make a difference to inclusion in the earliest years.

Annamarie Hassall

Annamarie Hassall
MBE, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), nasen; Chair of Whole School SEND

This review guide was originally inspired by practitioners and early years experts through the EY SEND Partnership, bringing organisations together to support vital improvements in access and inclusion. Since its development and piloting, the EY SEND Review Guide has been used widely, alongside companion guides for primary, secondary and special school settings.

WHAT IS AN EARLY YEARS (EY) SEND REVIEW?

A SEND review helps settings evaluate the effectiveness of their provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This EY SEND review is suitable for preschools, day nurseries, playgroups and maintained nursery settings. A SEND review should help to ensure that all children achieve their very best and achieve successful transitions.

Our recommendation is that an EY SEND review should be led by an EY specialist who has significant direct experience within the EY sector and has a track record of improving outcomes for children with SEND.

The review process normally takes 2-3 days in total. This includes the preparatory work before going into the setting, the time needed to collect information during the setting visit, and the report writing and feedback that takes place after the review. Settings may decide to establish an ongoing relationship with their reviewer who can provide follow-up support and advice. The timescale for a review would normally be 2-3 weeks from preparation to reporting. If follow-up support is undertaken it may vary from intensive weekly visits to a number of visits spread across the year.

Who pays for the review and how much will it cost?

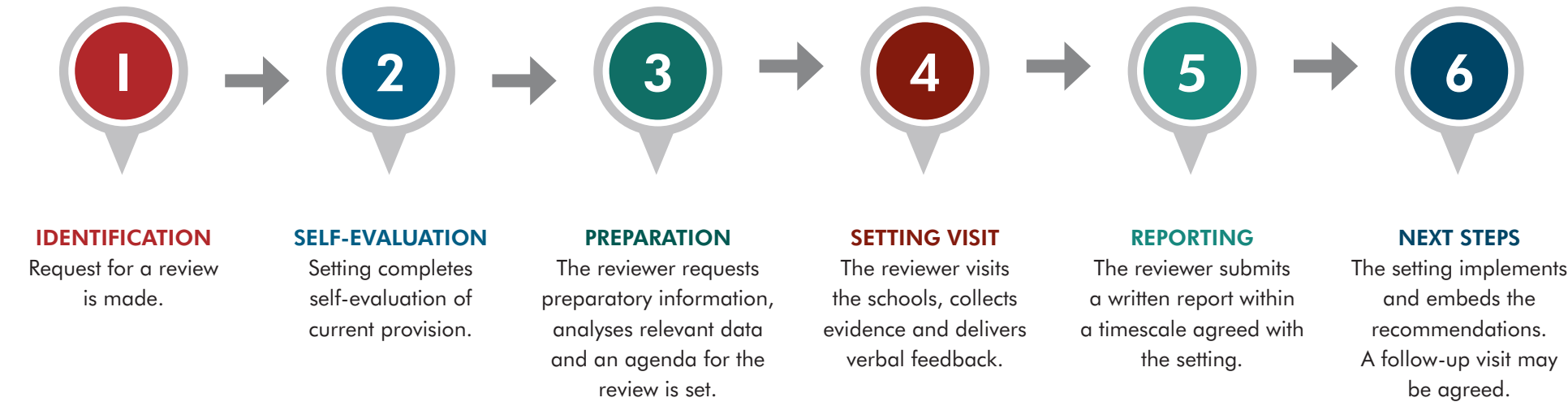
EY settings are responsible for paying for their SEND review.

The cost is agreed between the reviewer and the setting and may vary depending on the time needed to complete the review and the experience of the reviewer.

Settings may also group together to undertake reviews on an exchange basis, each putting forward a member of staff to train as a reviewer.



SIX STAGE PROCESS





IDENTIFICATION

A setting might undertake a SEND review for several reasons:

- Improving the quality of provision for children with SEND in the setting
- Gaining a better understanding of the wellbeing and needs of children with SEND
- Identifying SEND as an area of development for the setting
- Significant change in the numbers or needs of children with SEND in the setting
- A change in leadership or management of the setting
- Wanting a fresh perspective on provision from an experienced EY leader
- External validation of a setting's evaluation of its SEND provision.



SELF-EVALUATION

The SEND review self-evaluation form

The review form is an opportunity for the setting to comprehensively self-evaluate its SEND provision before the review takes place. This provides useful information to the reviewer and helps the setting to focus on what it does well and areas for development. It is a way for the setting to make the most of their review.

It is recommended that the Setting Manager and the SENCo complete the self-evaluation form together. In some settings it may also be appropriate for senior leaders such as Room Leaders to be involved. Many settings find it useful for all practitioners to have an input in the process, but this is dependent on how feasible this is in the context of the setting.

The self-evaluation form is a useful starting point for settings to reflect on the nature and quality of their current provision and the impact that it has for children with SEND. It should provide settings with priorities for future development.

Alongside observations on the review day, the completed form is the basis for discussion with the reviewer, and will lead to a clear picture of strengths and areas for development.

The SEND review self-evaluation form can be found from page 14 onwards in this document.



PREPARATION

Completing the Review Form

When completing the form, settings should consider each of the review statements and make a judgement as to whether they are confident that the practice is securely or partly in place in their setting, or whether it is an area for development.

Securely in place (S)	Practitioners are confident that the practice is consistent and embedded across the setting.
Partly in place (P)	Practitioners know that the practice is in place but are aware that there is still work to do in order to ensure that it is consistent and embedded across the setting.
Development Area (D)	Practitioners know that the practice is either not in place at all or is in the very early stages of development.

The comments/reference sources/actions section gives an opportunity to describe what is in place, where relevant information can be accessed, or any actions either currently in place or that need to be planned for the future. Practitioners should write a short summary description of their practice in relation to the statement, giving an indication of where further information to support their summary may be found. This process should not entail practitioners in duplicating information that can be found elsewhere in their setting documentation. Making a note of where this information can be found will be helpful on the review day.

Area to consider	S	P	D	Comments /Reference sources/Actions
There are opportunities for children with SEND to appropriately express their views within the setting.		X		During key group time children’s opinions and likes/dislikes are regularly asked for and discussed. The outcomes of these discussions are used to plan group times and enhance continuous provision. Children are well engaged with their learning journals and the journals reflect their individual choices and opinions. We are currently reviewing the process for completing learning journals to strengthen this further. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key group planning• Provision planning files• Children’s learning journals• Journal review paperwork

Here are some items that may be relevant to the review:

- The setting’s latest Ofsted report
- Setting website
- Current attainment and progress data
- Planning and observation records
- Learning journals
- Intervention data
- Comparative attendance data for children with SEND
- Summary of the SEND register
- Setting Self-Evaluation form
- SEND development plan
- A provision map
- Any external reviews or reports
- Statutory policies relating to SEND
- Policy and practice for deployment of additional or visiting practitioners specifically appointed to support children with SEND, including induction and training
- Setting CPD programmes and individual training plans relating to SEND.



Preparation – checklist for the setting

To do	Complete
Agree a date for the review to take place	
Agree a provisional agenda for the review*	
Contact owners/chair of management committee/governors to establish availability to meet with the reviewer	
Complete the review form (see page 14 onwards), referencing documentation that it would be helpful for the reviewer to see	
Note where documentation can be found so that it is available on the day of the review	
Email completed form to the reviewer two full weeks before the review date, along with a confirmed agenda	

*See Appendix 2 (page 22) for example agenda



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REVIEW VISIT

The review is likely to take the equivalent of one day or two sessions in a setting. For some settings the review day may go beyond the time when children are present – for example in settings where children only attend for the morning session. The review can be completed after the morning session has finished, or settings may choose to continue on another day. It is completely flexible and can be arranged with the reviewer.

A programme should be agreed in advance so that people are available on the day the review takes place. Appendix 2 (page 22) gives an example of an agenda for a review day.

The agreed programme may include gathering the views of a range of stakeholders including:

- Setting manager
- SENCo
- Setting practitioners/key persons
- Parents/carers
- Children
- Setting owners/chair of management committee/governors.

Reviewers may also find it helpful to gather information in a variety of ways including:

- A tour of the setting
- Observation of practice
- Observation of an intervention session for a child or children with SEND
- Review of assessment systems of all children including those with SEND
- Review of learning journals/children’s records of achievement
- Observation of unstructured activities such as lunchtime



REPORT

Following the review day, the reviewer produces a written report for settings within an agreed timescale.

The report reflects the context of the setting. This may include the size of the setting, attendance for children with SEND, the percentage of children on the SEND register and those that are eligible for EY funding.

The report summarises the strengths and areas for development agreed during the review, and a series of evidence-informed recommendations for improving the quality of provision for children with SEND.



NEXT STEPS

It is important that settings address recommendations and take action to develop and maintain the quality of their SEND provision. There are a number of ways that settings may choose to help themselves with this:

- Write an action plan and record progress.
- Many settings have found it helpful to ask the reviewer to return after an agreed period of time to review progress with the recommendations.
- Agree a package of support with their reviewer, or the reviewer may be able to direct settings to practitioners or organisations who can provide ongoing support. Regular visits can often help the setting to maintain focus on the recommendations.

This review can be used effectively as a tool to aid continuing reflection and the assessment of practice, helping to ensure that provision meets the needs of all children, and importantly giving children with SEND an inclusive and positive experience in an EY setting.



SEND review self-evaluation form

Setting details					
Name of setting			Telephone number		
Address and postcode					
Email address					
Name of manager					
Type of setting	Playgroup	Preschool	Day Nursery	Maintained Nursery School	Other
The setting is	Privately owned	Managed by committee	Overseen by governors of a school	Other	
Details of lead person (owner / chair of committee / SEND governor)					
Opening	Sessional	Daily	Term-time only	Term time + holiday provision	All year round
Details of opening times					
Children					
Number of children on roll					
Number of children attending each session					
Number of children on SEND register					
Number of funded 2 year old children					
Number of funded 3/4 year old children					
Number of children with EY Pupil Premium					
Staff					
Number of staff in setting					
Name of deputy					
Name of SENCo					
Other contextual details					
e.g. Demographics, level of funding, recruitment and retention					

Leadership of SEND

Area to consider	S	P	D	Comments /Reference sources/Actions
There are high aspirations for all children alongside a clear vision for the education of all children with SEND.				
Setting admission and transition policies actively welcome and engage parents and carers of children with SEND.				
Leaders understand their statutory responsibilities under the SEND Code of Practice and the Equality Act. Policies and practices are effectively implemented in line with statutory requirements and are reviewed and evaluated regularly.				
The setting has a named SENCO who works within the senior leadership team or alongside the setting manager, and they ensure that the vision for children with SEND is explicit.				
All staff understand and accept they are responsible for the progress of all children.				
The setting has an agreed SEND development plan with identified priorities for the improvement of provision.				
The setting supports and develops successful partnerships with other settings the child attends, for example Schools and Childminder.				
The setting has knowledge of, and understands the process for, requesting an EHCP needs assessment.				
The SEND register is accurate and reviewed at least termly.				
The setting ensures that the owner/management committee/governors are appropriately informed about provision for children with SEND and are given opportunities to gain knowledge of quality SEND provision, so that they are able to provide support and, where appropriate, challenge for the leadership of the setting.				

Key: S – Securely in place P – Partly in place D – Development area – see guidance notes for more information

Outcomes and the quality of teaching and learning for children with SEND

Area to consider	S	P	D	Comments /Reference sources/Actions
Managers and SENCoS work closely with practitioners to support planning and adaptive practice.				
Managers and SENCoS are involved in reviewing and helping practitioners improve the quality of teaching for all children.				
Practitioners have a clear understanding of children's needs and individual plans are informed by parent and carer partnerships. These are consistently applied throughout the setting.				
Children with SEND have individual plans that are reviewed with parents and carers, and their input is documented at least termly.				
The individual needs of children are communicated effectively to all staff, and all staff are able to communicate their observations.				
The routines of the day are flexible and responsive to individual children's needs, to support children's wellbeing, and sense of security and consistency.				
Evidence from observations shows the teaching and learning in specific interventions is consistently good or better.				
The system of record-keeping for learning and development is clear, indicating starting points, progress, areas of strength and areas for development. Practitioners use observations and assessment information to plan effectively.				
The setting has a good understanding of how children with SEND achieve across all areas of learning.				
The progress of children with SEND is consistently strong; children achieve well in line with expectations of the EYFS, especially in the Prime Areas.				

Key: S – Securely in place P – Partly in place D – Development area – see guidance notes for more information

Working with children and parents/carers of children with SEND

Area to consider	S	P	D	Comments /Reference sources/Actions
Admission and induction processes are clear, well planned and appropriate for the needs of the child and the family, making adaptations where necessary.				
Communication with parents and carers of children with SEND is promoted by the setting's effective systems and enables parents and carers to meaningfully contribute to shaping the quality of support and provision.				
The setting and parents and carers work effectively in partnership to achieve consistent and high-quality plans to support children with SEND.				
Children with SEND are fully included and supported to take part in all activities in the setting, including any extra provision, enrichment activities, clubs or other out of hours activities.				
There are opportunities for children with SEND to express their views within the setting.				
Individual plans for transition take account of parents' and carers' and children's views.				
Parents and carers are made aware of local and national services that provide impartial advice and support.				

Key: S – Securely in place P – Partly in place D – Development area – see guidance notes for more information

Assessment and identification

Area to consider	S	P	D	Comments /Reference sources/Actions
The setting completes the 2 year old check for all children.				
Observation and assessment systems use all available data to support the effective identification of barriers to learning.				
Children's outcomes are tracked methodically, and the information used effectively to support learning and transition.				
Children's attendance is monitored and supported where appropriate.				
All available information, including data on attendance and observations of behaviour, is considered before identifying that a child may have SEND.				
Parents and carers are fully involved in discussions with the setting on identification and assessment of need.				
Comprehensive assessment supports accurate identification of need and informs practice.				

Key: S – Securely in place P – Partly in place D – Development area – see guidance notes for more information

The efficient use of resources

Area to consider	S	P	D	Comments /Reference sources/Actions
SEND has a high profile in staff continuing professional development and learning.				
All staff engage in high quality continuing professional development and learning to support improved outcomes for all children.				
There is an effective system in place for professional review for all staff, linked to the setting development plan, and includes wider aspirations regarding all children's outcomes.				
The setting uses the Key Person system effectively in line with the requirements of the EYFS and deployment of all staff is routinely reviewed and evaluated for impact.				
There is a graduated approach to provision and planning and interventions are carefully implemented. Whole group, small group and individual support is balanced appropriately.				
Interventions are evidence informed, coordinated and deployed effectively, and monitored through a cycle of review measuring impact. Systems are in place to support this process, for example, through the use of a provision map.				

Key: S – Securely in place P – Partly in place D – Development area – see guidance notes for more information

The quality of SEND provision

Area to consider	S	P	D	Comments /Reference sources/Actions
The setting is appropriately staffed and resourced in order to ensure high quality provision and that children with SEND have their statutory needs met.				
Outside agency support is engaged appropriately and utilised effectively.				
The setting is responsive to the needs, development and well-being of all children. It makes reasonable adjustments to the physical and emotional environment to ensure effective inclusion.				
The setting strives to develop its expertise in SEND and is aware of its strengths and areas for developing further.				
The setting keeps abreast of developments in practice for SEND provision, and critically evaluates its own practice in line with these developments.				

Key: S – Securely in place P – Partly in place D – Development area – see guidance notes for more information

APPENDIX 1

Reporting Template – SEND Review for EY Settings Report Template

Name of setting:	
Date(s) and time(s) of review	
Names and roles of setting staff undertaking the review	
Name of reviewer	
Contextual details	
Leadership	
Outcomes and teaching and learning	
Working with children and parents/carers of children with SEND	
Assessment and identification	
The efficient use of resources	
The quality of SEND provision	
General feedback and thanks	
Recommendations and agreed priorities	
Where to access further support	

APPENDIX 2

Example agenda for review

Anywhere Day Nursery
SEND Review – Wednesday December 25th, 2024
Setting Manager: Theresa Green Deputy: Robyn Banks SENCo: Holly Wood

Time	Activity
9.30am	Arrival, introductions
9.45am	Tour of setting Baby room 2 yr old room 3/4 yr old room
10.45am	Break
11.00am	Review form – discussion with manager and SENCo
12.00 noon	Meeting with parents/carers
12.30pm	Lunch
1.15pm	Meeting with owner
1.45pm	Review form – discussion with manager and SENCo
3.00pm	Break – reviewers prepare feedback
3.30pm	Feedback to manager and SENCo



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