



Inclusion, additional learning needs and additional learning provision

Guidance for mainstream schools on the expectations of the ALN Code

September 2021

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Introduction

In 2017 the Welsh Government committed to a renewed focus of success for all learners and embarked on a comprehensive transformation programme as outlined in [Education in Wales: Our national mission, Action Plan 2017-2021](#). There is a recognition that in order to achieve the national vision there is a need to create strong and inclusive schools that are committed to excellence and well-being where every learner matters and matters equally.

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (2018) Act Wales is a part of this transformation programme. This provides a new statutory framework for supporting learners with additional learning needs (ALN), and is accompanied by a mandatory Code which makes sure that the new system has a set of clear, legally enforceable parameters within which schools, local authorities and other partners responsible for the delivery of services to learners with ALN must act. The aim of the new approach, as stated in the [Code](#) is as follows¹:

To support the creation of a fully inclusive education system where all learners are given the opportunity to succeed and have access to an education that meets their needs and enables them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning

The new statutory framework is underpinned by the following 5 principles:

1. **A rights-based approach** where the views, wishes and feelings of the learner and their parents/carers are central to the planning and provision of support, enabling them to participate as fully as possible in the decision-making processes and have the right to challenge decisions about ALN, additional learning provision.
2. **Early identification, intervention and effective transition planning** where needs are identified and provision put in place at the earliest opportunity and where appropriate interventions are put in place to prevent the development or escalation of ALN.
3. **Collaboration** where services work together to ensure ALN are identified early and appropriate co-ordinated support is put in place to enable learners to achieve positive expectations, experiences and outcomes.
4. **Inclusive education** supporting participation fully in mainstream education, wherever, feasible and a whole setting approach to meeting the needs of learners with ALN.
5. **A bilingual system** where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver additional learning provision in Welsh.

What is the purpose of this guidance?

Under the new ALN system local authorities have a duty to review the arrangements made by schools to meet the needs of learners with ALN. Therefore, the purpose of this guidance is to:

1. provide clarity what every local authority will need to review;
2. provide clarity on what is expected of mainstream schools in meeting the needs of learners with ALN.

¹The Additional Learning Needs Code <https://gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-code>

The purpose of the LA review is to establish whether the overall provision available for learners within the local authority is sufficient to meet the overall needs of its population of learners with ALN. Therefore, an LA would be expected to have a view on the extent to which the following are available in maintained schools in its area:

- high quality, differentiated teaching for learners with ALN;
- targeted intervention and support for learners with ALN;
- effective systems for monitoring the progress and achievement of learners with ALN and their inclusion in the everyday life of the school;
- arrangements for involving specialists in cases where it is appropriate to do so;
- arrangements for reviewing the effectiveness of interventions used to support learners with ALN and the skills and expertise of staff;
- arrangements for involving learners and parents at every stage.

To establish a clear picture of the capacity and effectiveness of provision for learners with ALN, the local authority, in partnership with the regional consortium and its wider stakeholders, will work with schools to collate evidence enabling it to determine whether local arrangements are sufficient.

What does this guidance cover?

Every school should expect, in exercising its functions under the ALNET Act and adhering to its underlying principle of inclusive education, to take all reasonable steps to secure provision to meet the needs of learners with ALN. This document outlines what would be reasonable to expect in mainstream schools for learners with ALN. It is divided into three sections as follows:

- 1. Inclusion** – creating inclusive learning environments and using inclusive pedagogy to meet the diverse needs of all learners. This section will be useful for practitioners, additional learning needs co-ordinators (ALNCOs) and senior leaders. It will be of particular interest to ALNCOs as it will be their responsibility to work with senior leaders to establish practices that secure high-quality provision to address the general duty of preventing the development or the escalation of additional learning needs.
- 2. Additional Learning Needs** – identifying barriers to learning and accurately determining ALN. This section will be useful for ALNCOs and senior leaders providing details on the statutory duty for identifying ALN and the evidence-based strategies to support learners with ALN. It will be of particular relevance for ALNCOs as it will be their responsibility to support senior leaders in complying with the new duty.
- 3. Additional Learning Provision** – minimum standards for providing support which is additional to or different from what is generally made available in mainstream schools. This section will be of interest to senior leaders and ALNCOs as it provides information on the statutory duty of securing additional learning provision. It will be of particular relevance to ALNCOs as they will have the responsibility of making sure that the additional learning provision meets the needs of all learners with ALN in school.

Inclusion



This section will be useful for practitioners, additional learning needs co ordinators (ALNCOs) and senior leaders. It will be of particular interest to ALNCOs as it will be their responsibility to work with senior leaders to establish practices that secure high-quality provision to address the general duty of preventing the development or the escalation of additional learning needs.

Inclusive education

Inclusive education is a combination of inclusive practices and inclusive pedagogy that supports all learners equitably whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, attainment, learning difficulty, disability, language and background. It ensures particular attention to the provision made for, and the achievement of, individuals and different groups of learners within the school. In fully inclusive schools, all learners are engaged and achieving through being present, participating and learning.

Successfully inclusive schools are effective and protective of all learners managing to encourage participation from learners themselves as well as from their families and their communities. Such schools create opportunities for a range of working practices and support for individuals or groups of learners to ensure that no one is excluded from companionship and participation in school. Consequently, an inclusive school is likely to look different everyday as it continuously changes to meet the needs of learners. However, what does not change are the values and principles that underpin inclusive education. Sustainable whole-school practice is dependent on understanding the principles that underpin inclusion. The [International Bureau of Education \(IBE\)](#)² identifies that success is dependent upon understanding that inclusion is:

- a never-ending process about learning to live with difference and learning how to learn from difference;
- concerned with the identification and removal of barriers and these barriers may take different forms; some of which are to do with the way schools are organised, the forms of teaching provided and the way learner progress is evaluated;
- about the presence, participation and achievement of all learners where they are in school, have quality learning experiences which secures meaningful learning across the whole curriculum;
- focused on groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or underachievement.

By ensuring access to all aspects of the curriculum, through high-quality but routine provision, as well as access to the school environment and facilities it is possible to anticipate and address potential barriers to learning. Such strong practice should reduce the need for remediation or additional intervention at a later stage for a number of learners. **A successful inclusive school therefore is the product of inclusive design combined with management, operation and maintenance, and positive well-trained staff.**

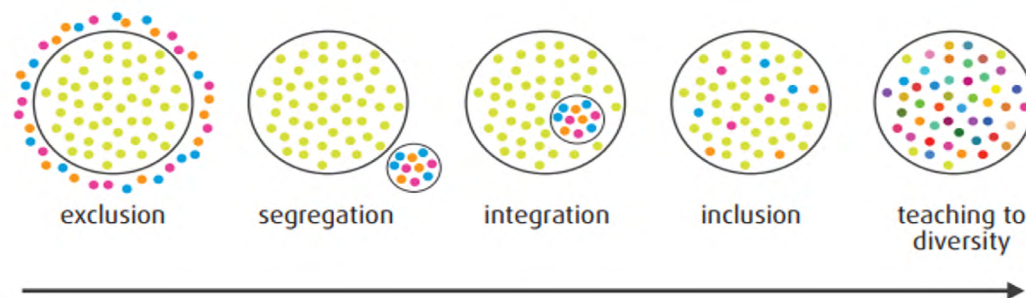


Image sourced from <https://www.facebook.com/askinclusion/>

² UNESCO-IBE (2016). Reaching out to all learners: A resource pack for supporting inclusive education. Geneva: UNESCO-IBE. Retrieved from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002432/243279e.pdf>

Creating inclusive schools by design

Planning for and delivering inclusive education is not dependent on mainstream practitioners having specialist skills or knowledge. However, it does not come by accident and is achieved only through design. As part of the national reform, the curriculum in [Wales is changing](#) and the Welsh Government has set out a clear statement of what is important in delivering a broad and balanced education for all learners. In addition, one of the principles of the Code is the expectation that high-quality provision is secured to prevent the development or escalation of additional learning needs. Therefore, the ALNCo will play a significant role in working with senior leaders to ensure curriculum and assessment design specifically seek to mitigate barriers to learning. Taking the learning needs of all into account when designing the curriculum and learning environment will eliminate the need to 'retrofit' teaching for most learners.

The regional approach, as detailed in [Enabling Equity and Excellence](#) promotes and supports sustainable school improvement and learning leadership in order that schools make informed choices around inclusion and equity. It supports school leaders in robust self-evaluation with a specific focus on the quality of the provision and practices for inclusion and teaching, and the impact these have on the well-being and outcomes of all learners. To further support this process, all schools have access to local authority specialist inclusion teams and other partners, such as NHS health professionals, for additional guidance on creating inclusive settings by design.

Supporting legislation to secure inclusive practice and pedagogy

The Equality Act (2010) promotes inclusion as it mandates schools to make reasonable adjustments for disabled learners and take positive actions for learners with protected characteristics to ensure equal access to education provision. It goes beyond the formal education provided covering all school activities such as extra-curricular and leisure activities, afterschool and homework clubs, sports activities and school trips, as well as school facilities such as libraries and IT facilities. The reasonable adjustments duty is an anticipatory and continuing one that is owed to disabled learners generally. This means that a school should not wait until it has disabled learners on role to make the necessary adjustments and should plan ahead through the mandatory Strategic Equalities Plan. It is expected that schools take action to tackle the particular disadvantage, different needs or disproportionately low participation of particular learner groups known as positive actions provisions and publish its intentions through its Accessibility Plan. It is recommended that schools consult widely with appropriate stakeholders, including LA specialists and health professionals, to create the [Accessibility Plan](#).

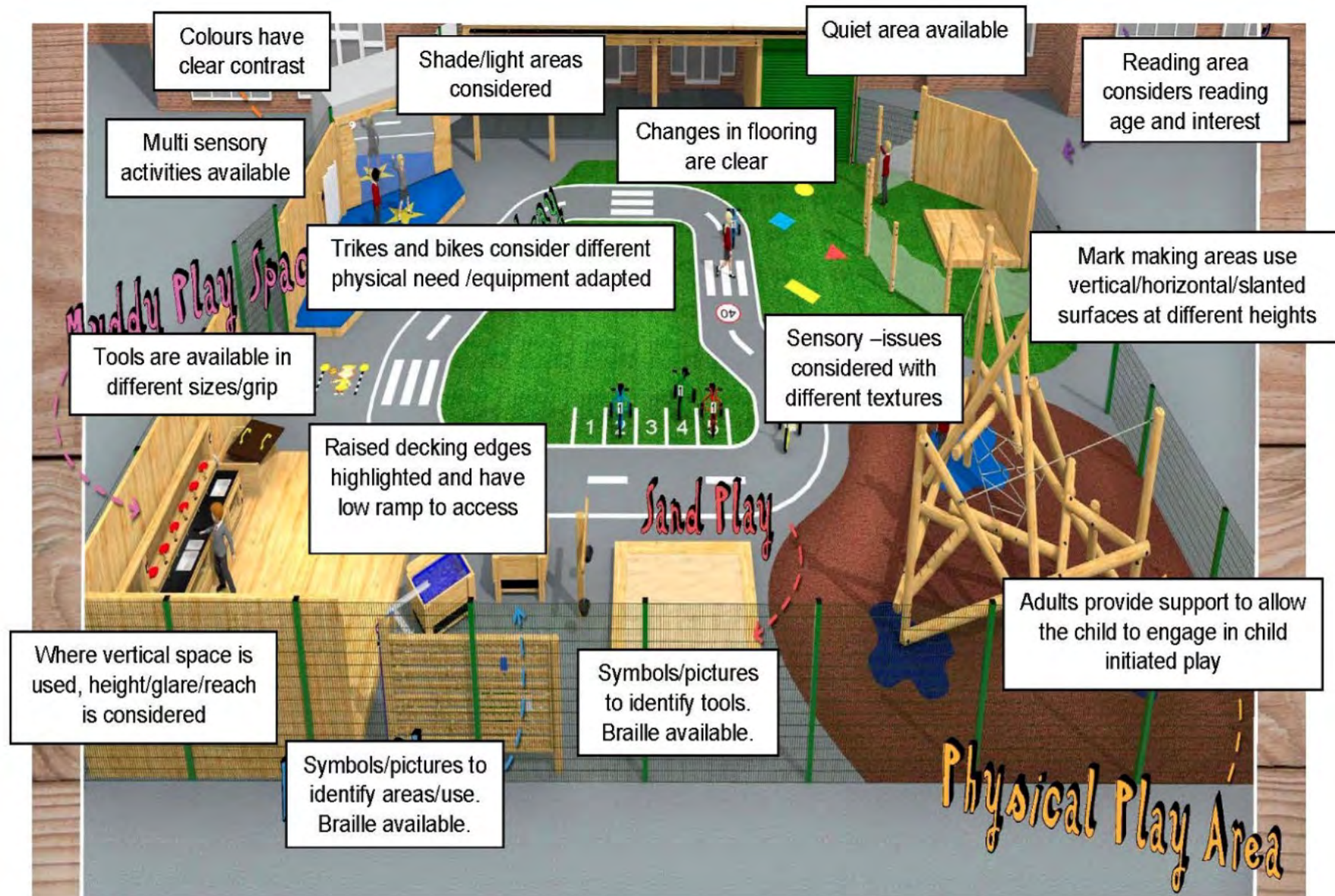
The learning environment

In creating an inclusive learning environment, the ALNCo would work with senior leaders to take into account:

- the organisation of the classroom environment;
- deciding on simple management techniques;
- establishing a basic set of standard operating procedures; and
- ensuring that all staff are suitably trained and positively promote effective inclusive approaches.

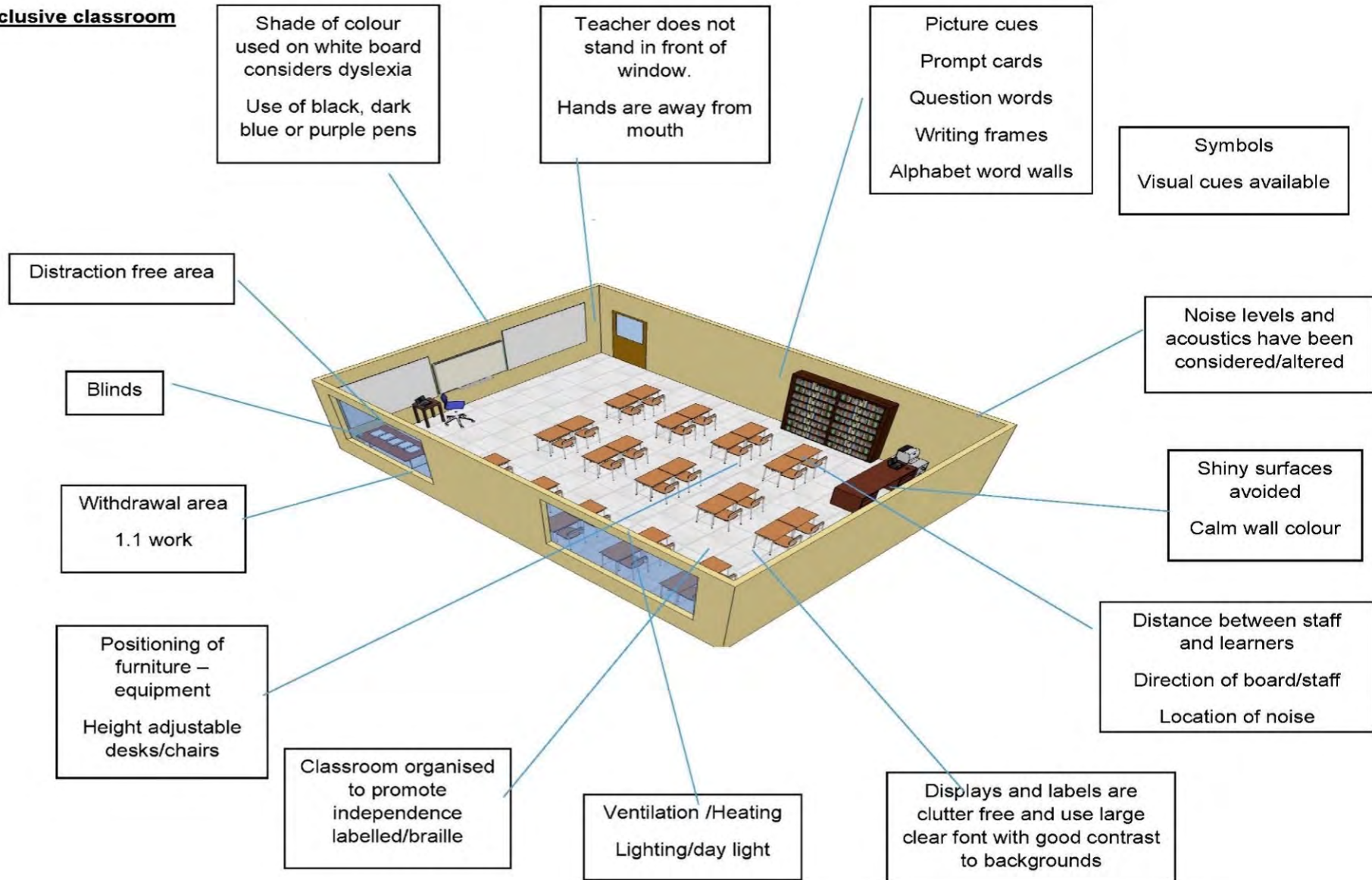
The first of these takes into account environmental factors as follows:

The inclusive outdoor classroom



The inclusive classroom

The inclusive classroom



Having successfully organised the classroom, the next step would be to agree on simple management expectations:

Management of the learning environment

1	Classroom rules & expectations are displayed, taught directly, practiced, & positively reinforced.
2	Typical classroom routines for example, start of the lesson/obtaining materials/ group work/ independent work/ seeking help, are taught directly, practised & positively reinforced.
3	Efficient transition procedures, using a range of methods for communicating change (language, sign, sound) for entering the classroom/ changing activities/ leaving the lesson etc... are taught, practised, & positively reinforced
4	The classroom is clear of obstacles, there is sufficient space for all learners and all learners are accessible to the teacher
5	Seating is planned (taking into account left-right handedness, sensory or physical needs, friendship or peer groups)
6	Noise management strategies consistently used to ensure optimal conditions for participation and learning
7	Learners have easy access to materials, equipment (including left and right handed equipment) and supplies – for example: text used in a lesson is appropriate to interest and levels of ability; reading rulers; coloured overlays; communication aids; emotional check-in systems; fiddle toys; visual timers; clear, well-contrasted, clutter-free text worksheets; desk top versions of key vocabulary word banks and numeracy support, calculator, number lines etc....

There is a need also to create a set of generic classroom/setting procedures that are applied consistently at all times in all lessons.

Classroom Standard Operating Procedures

1	Instructions are clear and backed up with visual reinforcement
2	Where extra adult support is available, this is planned for and used to promote independence in learning, protect self-esteem and increase learner inclusion within their peer group
3	Clarity is provided about the structure and objectives of the lesson
4	Tasks are explained and modelled and simplified, extended or changed to accommodate all learners
5	Pre teaching of subject/task vocabulary and over-learning opportunities are provided for those learners who need it
6	Help given to learners who need support or resources to access text
7	Effective use made of questioning to challenge learners at all levels
8	Assessment is used effectively to inform next steps learning in the lesson
9	Multisensory opportunities are offered as a substitute to pen and paper activities at all levels and ICT is used to support alternatives to written recording
10	A variety of learner groupings are employed and scaffolded to ensure so that learners are aware of, and able to draw on each other's strengths and skills with time and opportunity given to learners to help one another
11	Time is built in to ensure learners can process information before being expected to respond

The final matter for consideration is to ensure that staff are suitably trained and enabled to positively promote and sustain effective inclusive environments. The ALNCo will be well placed to support senior leaders in securing the application of the practices outlined above in the event that a school identifies the need to improve systemic inclusive approaches to address the diversity and enhance the experiences of a wide range of learners, will have access to extensive timetabled professional learning opportunities and where appropriate bespoke assistance from the local authority and its wider partners, including NHS health professionals.

Effective practitioners

The purposes of the Curriculum for Wales embody a vision of education which incorporates the importance of learner well-being. The starting point for any teacher therefore, is understanding the inter-dependency between well-being and learning. An effective teacher will ensure that every learner feels valued, respected, and nurtured, has a sense of belonging and experiences success and recognition. The national guidance [Learner well-being and assessment: mutual support systems](#) provides further information on the role of teachers in promoting the well-being of learners through their classroom practice.

An effective teacher will create educational provision this is accessed by all learners in all lessons at all times without exception. This is the day-to-day practice which happens in every classroom to secure progress and is the foundation of all learning. This is often described either as routine, universal, quality-first or high-quality teaching. The Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership are likely to prove helpful where there is a need to develop teaching capacity. Where routine/universal/quality-first/high-quality provision is strong this should reduce the need for remediation or additional interventions at a later stage for a number of learners. A recent international collaboration has undertaken a critical analysis of what constitutes effective teaching and published as [The Great Teaching Toolkit Evidence Review \(2020\)](#). This provides extensive and comprehensive details on the components and approaches to improve teacher effectiveness in securing accelerated learning for all learners, identifying four priorities for doing so as follows:

- understand the content they are teaching and how it is learnt;
- create a supportive environment for learning;
- manage the classroom to maximise the opportunity to learn; and
- present content, activities and interactions that activate their students' thinking.

Differentiation as part of routine teaching

Differentiation is a cornerstone of day-to-day classroom provision and is part and parcel of routine teaching and the ALNCo will be well placed to support senior leaders in promoting inclusive strategies and approaches to reduce the need for additional support at a later stage. Differentiation has a broad meaning, because it includes any way in which modifications are made to the content, presentation, environment or expectations of teaching and learning. It can range from something which has been carefully planned, for example a specific activity, but it can also be something that occurs in the moment, such as a learner's response to teaching. Differentiation can occur on many levels, it can be resource-intensive for example, using a Teaching Assistant to support a particular learner, or it can be low-key and inexpensive, for example re-phrasing a question to make it more accessible for learners. Crucially, though effective teachers ensure that differentiation is continuous and permeates all aspects of the lesson and is not a one-off activity such as the use of a bespoke worksheet or specific materials. Differentiation should be integral to all lessons and particularly so for those learners who are streamed or grouped according to ability, as this does not in itself, constitute differentiation.

Targeted interventions as part of routine teaching

Where learner progress is not as anticipated, targeted 'catch-up' interventions to supplement differentiated teaching may well be needed to address specific areas for development. This is a fundamental element of high-quality, but routine, teaching. A combination of high-quality teaching with effective, short, time-limited catch-up interventions will be enough for most learners to ensure that their progress is in-line with their potential. An effective teacher will see any child that struggles as 'typical' until proven otherwise. Where additional support is needed to develop school practice, for example, on early identification and interventions to address emerging learner needs, the ALNCo is well placed to work with external agencies such as the LA and its wider partners, including NHS health professionals.

Assessment should support teachers in identifying, capturing and reflecting on the progress of learners over time as articulated in the [Curriculum for Wales national guidance on assessment](#). Only when there is well-documented assessment evidence, that shows that a child has not responded to the high-quality, targeted group or individual strategies and support available, that consideration is given to investigating the possibility that the child may have significant barriers to learning.



Additional Learning Needs

This section provides details of the process for identifying barriers to learning and accurately determining ALN. It will be useful for senior leaders and ALNCos providing details on the new statutory duties and the evidence-based strategies to support learners with ALN. It will be of particular relevance for ALNCos as it will be their responsibility to support senior leaders in complying with the new duty.

Additional Learning Needs

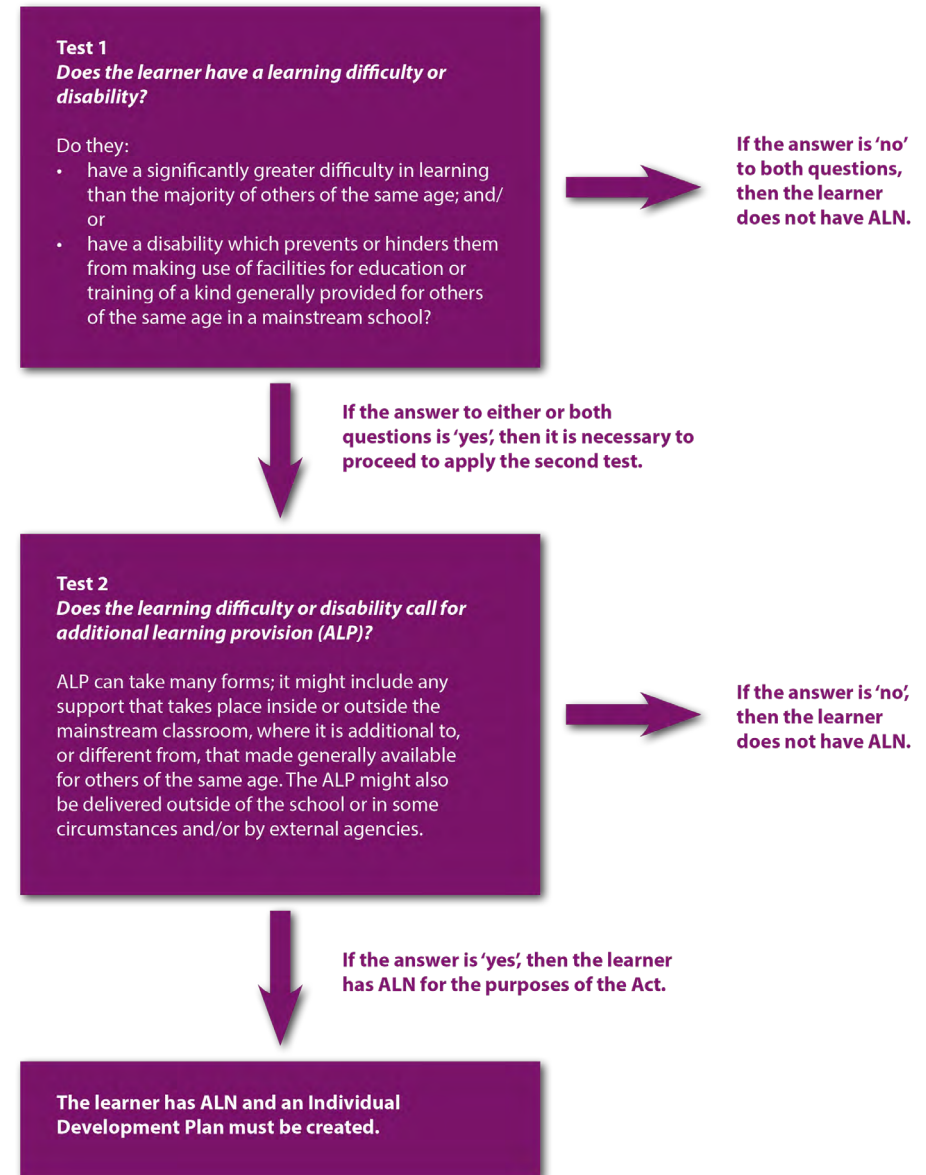
Where progress is less than expected, high-quality teaching, including differentiation, and standard, routine interventions or reasonable adjustments may not be sufficient to meet the needs of all learners. Such learners may well be identified as having additional learning needs (ALN) and it will be necessary for the school to take some additional or different action to secure progress.

The ALNCo along with the senior leadership team will have a critical role to play in deciding if effective techniques and strategies have been employed consistently to secure learner progress. Deciding if a child has ALN will be based on assessment of progress over time, from a range of sources. Where learners have an identified disability, for the purposes of the Equality Act, assessment evidence will relate to whether that disability prevents or hinders the learner from accessing any aspect of the school curriculum. The ALNCo will have a pivotal role in facilitating professional dialogue to develop a shared understanding of progress for individual learners, including expectations around what progression may look like and the pace at which a learner may progress.

Identifying ALN

The ALN Code articulates the procedure involved in deciding if a learner has ALN and a [regional guidance document](#) provides comprehensive details for schools on the decision-making processes for identifying ALN.

In establishing if a learner of compulsory school age has ALN, the following tests must be applied:



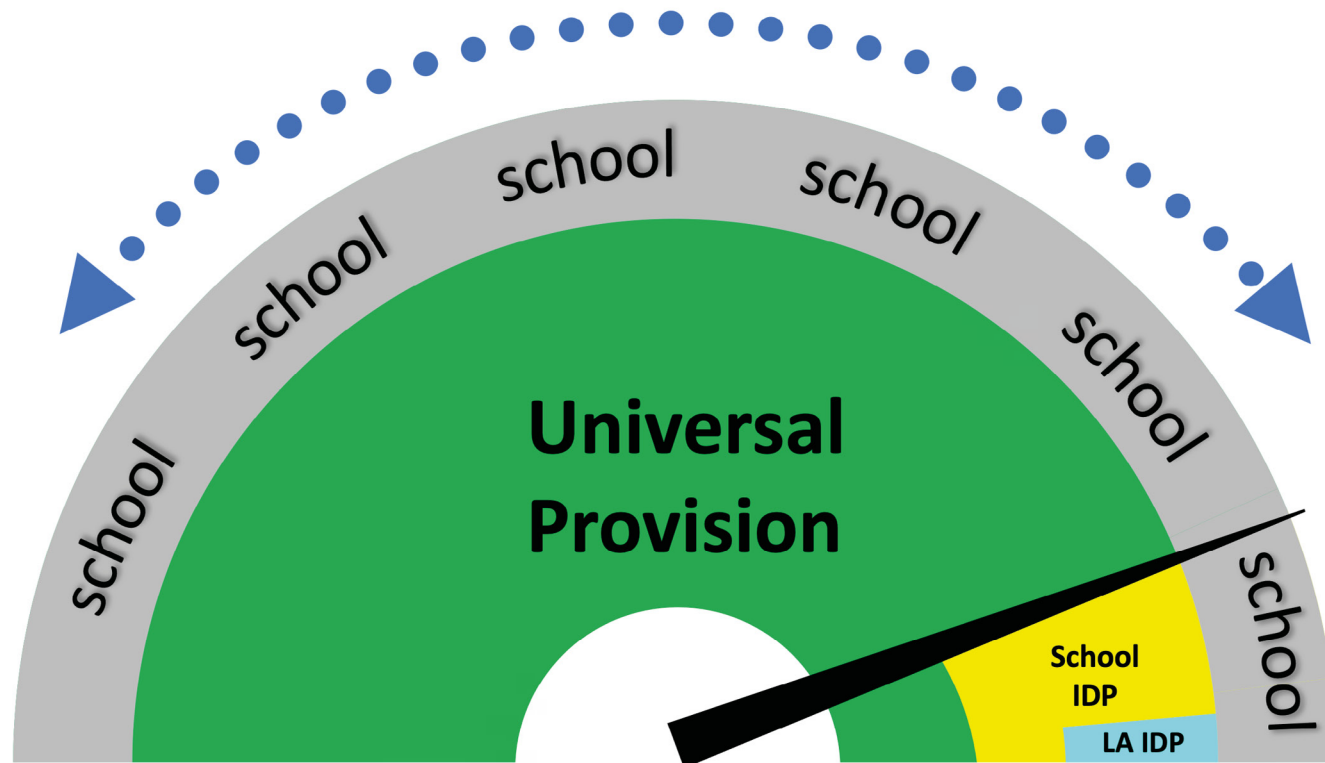
There is a slightly different test for learners below compulsory school age who attend a maintained mainstream school or nursery. The first test is still whether the child has a learning difficulty or disability, but the meaning of that is slightly different. Where the learner on reaching compulsory school age is likely to have significantly greater difficulty in learning, or a disability that hinders them from making use that made generally available to others of the same age, if no ALP were made. If the answer is 'yes' to either or both of these questions, then the second test should be applied.


Individual development plans


Under the new ALN system, for any learner identified as having an ALN, the school has to create and maintain an Individual Development Plan (IDP) and take all reasonable steps to ensure that the necessary additional learning provision (ALP) to meet the assessed need, is secured. The IDP is the document that contains a description of the ALN that acts as a barrier to the learner in achieving their educational potential and the ALP that is necessary to overcome or mitigate this barrier. It is created through collaboration with the learner and the learners' parents/carers in conjunction with any other professionals that might be involved. It is meant to be a working document which is used to inform teaching and learning, and not simply be part of an administrative process. In most cases an IDP will be maintained by a school. However, for a small number, where the complexity of the additional provision required to meet the needs of learners is unreasonable to expect a mainstream setting to provide, the IDP will be maintained by the local authority.


To ensure that the IDP continues to accurately reflect the learner's needs and details the provision required to meet those needs, there is a minimum requirement for IDPs to be reviewed at least annually and revised accordingly.


With the benefit of continued high-quality teaching coupled with effective ALP, many learners will be able to demonstrate appropriate progress with their learning. Where the original barrier to learning has been addressed the ALNCo will need to consider if the learner continues to have ALN. Where this is no longer the case there will be a need to cease the IDP.



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Degree of complexity – can move up or down depending on individual learner needs
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Effective inclusive whole-school practice with high quality routine teaching to meet individual learner needs. Advice and support in developing whole-school capacity can be sought from external agencies as appropriate.
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ALN identified, and school maintained IDP in place. Advice and guidance can be sought from external agencies to support schools in meeting the needs of individual learners. In some instances, external agencies may be directly involved with individual learners.
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An LA maintained IDP is required to support the school in securing the additional learning provision to meet the needs of individual learners.

Person-centred practice

Central to the rights-based approach of the Act, is the principle of participation – listening to learners and taking their views meaningfully into account. One way of ensuring that learners and their families can participate as fully as possible in decisions is to adopt person-centred practice (PCP). The approach is based on a set of shared values that can be used to plan **with** a person and **not for them**. It is a process that enables the identification of the support needed for the learner to be fully included and actively involved in all aspects of school life.

The ALNCo will have a central role in developing teacher understanding of the [principles and application of PCP](#). All teachers will be expected to be use PCP to inform teaching and learning and support learners with ALN.

Do learners with ALN require specialist or different pedagogical approaches?

There is no evidence to support that mainstream practitioners need to apply specialist pedagogy to secure improvement for learners with ALN. The 2020 review on effective mainstream practice for learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) conducted by the [Education Endowment Foundation](#)³ analysed international research and consulted with teachers and experts in the field, concluding that teachers should prioritise familiar but powerful strategies. This involves understanding the needs of individual learners and incorporating specific approaches into everyday routine classroom teaching and ‘being inclusive by design – not afterthought’. Without doubt, some learners need more time, more practice, more repetition, fewer tasks etc... but the strategies that provide good results, however, are the same for all learners. The review identifies five universal strategies that have a strong evidence base for effectively supporting the learning of those with ALN that will either already be within the repertoire of every mainstream teacher or could easily be added to it. The five strategies are detailed below and overleaf:

- scaffolding;
- explicit teaching;
- technology;
- cognition and metacognition; and
- flexible grouping.

³ Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Guidance Report (2020), Education Endowment Foundation

Is a diagnosis of any kind important in identifying pedagogical approaches to support learners?

For most learners with ALN, a diagnosis is not necessarily of use to a teacher when attempting to identify actual barriers to learning in the classroom. Diagnostic labels undoubtedly have benefits as they provide a general understanding of the characteristics of a condition. They may also definitely help some learners in understanding why their experiences of the world are as they are and may be a necessity, particularly in securing support from some specialist services. The key however, to securing accelerated learning for any learner with ALN is pedagogy and how skilful the teacher is in understanding and addressing the particular barriers for the learner. Consequently when trying to make day-to-day decisions on teaching, a diagnosis is unlikely to help inform the personalised learning experiences needed and will not give sufficient details of the support and adjustments required to enable each individual to learn and flourish.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

High-quality teaching for pupils with SEND

The evidence review for this guidance report found strong evidence that improving high quality teaching for all pupils will improve outcomes for pupils with SEND. Teachers should develop a repertoire of these strategies they can use flexibly in response to individual needs and use them as the starting point for classroom teaching for all pupils, including those with SEND.

“The importance of good quality teaching cannot be underestimated. The SEND Code of Practice is clear that schools should regularly check that 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.”

Rachel Rossiter, Assistant Head and SENCo in a school in Suffolk

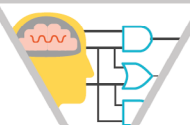
Scaffolding

Scaffolding offers temporary supports, such as a writing frame, that is gradually removed as the pupil becomes increasingly independent. Scaffolding is commonly considered part of guided practice in explicit instruction. Scaffolding can also be used to reinforce consistent expectations for behaviour - for example, what equipment is needed for each lesson and classroom routines within the school day.



Explicit instruction

Explicit instruction refers to a range of “teacher-led” approaches, focused on teacher demonstration followed by guided practice and independent practice. Explicit instruction is not just “teaching by telling” or “transmission teaching”. It usually begins with detailed teacher explanations, followed by extensive practice, later moving on to independent work.



Technology

Technology can assist teacher modelling. For example, a teacher may use a visualizer to model worked examples in English. To increase pupils’ practice, technology applications, such as online quizzes can prove effective. Speech generating apps to enable note-taking and extended writing can be helpful. Technology, as a method to provide feedback to pupils and/or parents can be effective, especially when the pupil can act on this feedback.



Cognitive & Metacognitive strategies: chunking

Cognitive strategies are skills like memorisation techniques or subject-specific strategies like methods to solve problems in maths. Metacognitive strategies help pupils plan, monitor and evaluate their learning. Chunking the task at each stage will support pupils with SEND - this may be through provision of checklists or providing one question at a time to make the information easier to process.



Flexible grouping

Flexible grouping describes an in-class approach that sees groups formed with an explicit purpose. They focus on a specific learning need and are purposely disbanded when the purpose is met. Allocating temporary groups can allow teachers to set up opportunities for collaborative learning, for example to read and analyse source texts or complete graphic organisers.



The ALP for a learner with ALN needs to be tailored to meet a specific and identifiable barrier to learning. Therefore a diagnosis does not automatically lead to a better understanding of the barrier to learning because: two learners with the same diagnosis are likely to have very different learning needs as individuals; not all learners with ALN will have a formal diagnosis; learners may have different diagnoses but present with similar needs and, diagnoses can only provide broad suggestions for general support.

Broad areas of need

There is a wide range of learning difficulties or disabilities, but they can be broadly classified into the following four areas:

- cognition and learning
- behaviour, emotional and social development
- sensory and/or physical
- communication and interaction

The Code describes these broad areas of need as follows:

- **Cognition and learning** - some children and young people who demonstrate features of moderate, severe or profound learning difficulties or specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia or dyspraxia, may require specific programmes to aid progress in cognition and learning. Some of these children and young people may have associated sensory, physical and behavioural difficulties.
- **Behaviour, emotional and social development** - some children and young people will demonstrate features of emotional and behavioural difficulties. They may be withdrawn or isolated, disruptive and disturbing, hyperactive or lacking concentration; they may have under-developed social skills; or present challenging behaviours.
- **Sensory and / or physical needs** - this area of need includes the wide spectrum of sensory, multi-sensory and physical difficulties. The sensory range extends from profound and permanent deafness or visual impairment through to lesser levels of loss, which may only be temporary. Physical impairments may arise from physical, neurological or metabolic causes that only require appropriate access to educational facilities and equipment; others may lead to more complex learning and social needs; some children and young people will have multi-sensory difficulties some with associated physical difficulties.
- **Communication and interaction** - some children and young people might experience difficulty in one, some or all aspects of speech, language and communication. This area of need may encompass children and young people with speech and language delay, impairments or disorders, specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia and dyspraxia, hearing impairment and those who demonstrate features within the autistic spectrum; it may also encompass some children and young people with moderate, severe or profound learning difficulties. The range of need will include those for whom language and communication difficulties are the result of permanent sensory or physical impairment.

For some learners, their identified need will fit clearly into one of these areas, but some have needs that span two or more areas, whereas for others the precise nature of their needs may not be clear at the outset. Consequently, it is important to conduct detailed individual assessment to ascertain an accurate understanding of the barrier to learning. Improving provision and reviewing its effectiveness in securing progress, should be an integral part of assessment that informs teaching and learning.

Identifying barriers to learning

Irrespective of the broad area of need, complexity or the type of barrier to learning, the same process should be applied where schools will need to make a judgment in each case about what it is reasonable to expect an individual to achieve. Where appropriate the school may wish to engage with external agencies to support the process of deciding if a learner has ALN. Then using assessment evidence, gathered over time and from a wide range of sources, it should be possible to identify learners who are making less than expect progress. Less than expected progress in learning is described in the Code as follows:

- **is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline;**
- **fails to match or better the child's or young person's previous rate of progress; or,**
- **fails to close, or widens, the attainment gap between the child or young person and their peers, despite the provision of support aimed at closing that gap.**

External agencies can help support schools in deciding whether an individual has ALN and determining the ALP required in several ways. They can:

- offer advice and support with strategies;
- help obtain more information;
- undertake assessments and/or observations to gather more information about an individual's needs; and
- suggest potential interventions.

The ALNCo will play a critical role in liaising with external agencies where appropriate to seek additional advice and guidance around both the effectiveness of the internal school processes for accurately identifying ALN, as well as determining the relevant evidence-informed strategies or interventions for addressing the barriers to learning.



Additional Learning Provision

This section will be of interest to senior leaders and ALNCos as it provides information on the new duty of securing additional learning provision. It will be of particular relevance to ALNCos as they will have the responsibility of making sure that the additional learning provision meets the needs of all learners with ALN in school.

Additional Learning Provision

Provision which is in addition to or different from what is normally made available in a mainstream school is considered additional learning provision (ALP). ALP will of course be an enhancement of what is available through high-quality, routine teaching.

The impact of the ALP will need to be monitored by the ALNCo in terms of how effective it has been in addressing the barrier to learning, but also, how this has secured accelerated learning for the individual across the curriculum.

What ALP would reasonably be expected to be made available in a mainstream school?

It is reasonable to expect a school to provide specific strategies and adult-led support or interventions to address typical barriers to learning. The ALP that a school provides will be unique, being contextual and reflecting the needs of its own community. Depending upon the school context, the driving force for improving ALP will be different for each school. For example, this could include a change to current or future school cohorts, the need to address underperformance of different ALN groups, accessing expertise in different ways or a decision to take a fresh look at what is happening in school. Consequently, it will be the role of the ALNCo in conjunction with the senior leadership team to establish what educational provision needs to be in place to support their learners with ALN. Where a school considers the need to increase its capacity to provide ALP to meet typical barriers to learning, it will have access to a range of specialist support through the local authority Inclusion Service and its wider partners, including NHS health professionals.

Every school should expect, in exercising its functions under the ALNET Act and adhering to its underlying principle of inclusive education, to take all reasonable steps to secure provision to meet typical barriers to learning.

The table overleaf provides an overview of the barriers to learning that typically occur in mainstream schools with the corresponding ALP considered to be reasonable for schools to provide.

The ALP will be an enhancement of what is available through high-quality, but routine teaching. It is the intensity, duration and the fact that the provision is required continuously to address a specific barrier to learning that qualifies it as ALP. Deciding on the ALP to be provided however, will be a context driven, iterative process that gathers assessment evidence over time, utilising a range of information, both qualitative and quantitative to establish the most effective way to overcome barriers to learning.

Barriers to learning	Where learners have a significant difficulty in learning and/or disability the following range of ALP would be considered reasonable for mainstream schools to provide
Limited attention span compared to developmentally appropriate milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally agreed interventions that provide enhanced targeted support to develop attention & listening by continuous use of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - dedicated time for movement or frequent small concentration periods - timers, so the learner knows they only need to focus for a comfortable amount of time - providing information in smaller chunks and/or using modified language - visuals to support attention - pre-teaching/teaching and overlearning of subject specific topic vocabulary using mind maps and word maps
Organisational difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally agreed enhanced targeted programmes that develop sequencing and organisational skills where specific difficulties continue to be evident. • Continuous enhanced support to develop personal organisation in response to timetabling/ managing equipment/ independence skills when there is a significant difference in ability to complete these tasks at an age appropriate level.
Memory difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous enhanced support to overlearn subject content to aid mastering skills for learners that have working memory/short term memory/auditory memory difficulties.
Difficulties understanding spoken language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing an additional method of communicating e.g. use of ICT, symbol communication (e.g. Makaton, PECS) BSL, SSE, if and when advised by external agencies • Locally agreed language development enhanced targeted interventions that support the understanding of language • Enhanced targeted pre-teaching/teaching and overlearning of subject specific/ topic vocabulary using mind maps and word maps • Implementation of an enhanced language programme guided by external specialists • Specific and enhanced use of questioning that matches the child's level of understanding.
Difficulties with spoken language and communicating what they need/ want, expressing their thoughts and ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner has an enhanced and specific programme to develop communication skills through their preferred means as guided by external agencies. • Continuous and enhanced use of strategies to develop confidence in speaking for learners with word finding difficulties • Continuous extended "thinking time" when responding to questions • Providing an additional method of communicating e.g. use of ICT, BSL, SSE, symbol communication if and when advised by external agencies.

Difficulties producing clear speech sounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing enhanced speech programmes guided by external agencies • Enhanced individualised sound, phonological and syllable awareness interventions • Enhanced and continuous “thinking time” when responding to questions
Persistent difficulties in acquisition of basic literacy and Numeracy skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of enhanced locally agreed programmes that are designed to support the acquisition of literacy skills • Implementation of enhanced locally agreed programmes that are designed to support the acquisition of numeracy skills.
Fine motor including manipulating tools/ equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally agreed enhanced targeted programmes that develop fluent handwriting and/or word-processing skills • Locally agreed structured enhanced targeted programmes for fine and gross motor skills
Gross motor difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally agreed structured enhanced programmes for Gross motor skills
Access to learning environment is compromised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily specialist equipment checks and maintenance to enable access to the curriculum at all times • Specific and individualised adaptations to school environment • Specially adapted equipment to access specific aspects of the curriculum. • Implementing enhanced specific intervention programmes devised by external agencies to facilitate access to the learning environment. • Use of specific specialist seating/equipment • Explicit/regular movement breaks and changes of position • Use of learner specific IT equipment/assistive technology to enable access to the curriculum • Availability of live voice materials • Low vision aids • Learner-specific modifications of written materials • Access to staff with modification/tactile approaches training • Specific Kinetic and tactile approaches taken for bespoke learning • Access to support staff with BSL/SSE/Deaf awareness training • Mobility/habilitation programme provided by external specialists

Difficulties in understanding or the use of social rules of communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced targeted support to deliver locally recognised packages of intervention that include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of learner specific prompts and visual cues. - Social stories for specific social skill development - Social stories to target specific skills to develop relationships. - Bespoke use of Comic strips - Develop understanding of emotions/social skills
Difficulty with social communication and developing relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced and dedicated time from an emotionally available adult with locally approved appropriate training • A range of enhanced targeted opportunities for social and emotional development e.g peer interventions • Learner specific enhanced restorative approaches • Learner specific enhanced programme to develop thinking skills and social interaction skills.
Difficulties with Sensory Processing and/or sensory regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally agreed enhanced sensory programme to support engagement, guided by external agencies • Enhanced targeted support for the learner's sensory profile
Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific and enhanced mentoring support, including adults or peers • Enhanced use of visual timetable in setting/school tailored to the individual learner profile • Enhanced dedicated support from an emotionally available adult with locally approved appropriate training • Enhanced specific support given during unstructured times
Emotional dysregulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced dedicated support from an emotionally available adult with locally approved appropriate training • Locally agreed enhanced programmes to develop emotional literacy. • Use of locally agreed enhanced relational based interventions. • Implementation of bespoke social stories to identify triggers and means of overcoming them • Enhanced and specific programmes to reduce stress • Enhanced learner specific de-escalation and self-management strategies • Enhanced locally agreed therapeutic interventions.

Supporting learners that require more complex provision to meet their needs in mainstream schools

Where a learner continues to experience difficulties accessing learning and making progress, despite high quality universal provision and the ALP provided through the school-based IDP, the school may be of the opinion that the learner's needs are more severe and complex and that the ALP it has provided is no longer sufficient. In such instances the school can refer the case to the local authority where a set of principles will be applied in determining whether it is reasonable for a school to continue to secure the ALP. These principles will relate to:

- the extent and duration of advice from external specialists that is likely to be unreasonable for a school to secure;
- the equipment that is likely to be unreasonable for a school to provide; and
- the intensity and duration of support and scale of internal engagement of staff at the school that is likely to be unreasonable for a school to provide.

Where a school considers the need to increase its capacity to meet the needs of learners with complex ALN, support and guidance can be provided by specialist LA inclusion staff and where appropriate specialist NHS health professionals.