

## Guidance about the Local Area SEND Inspection – Education Settings

The Local Area SEND Inspection is undertaken jointly by Ofsted and CQC. It is not an inspection of an individual education setting but of the whole SEND system across Hampshire. It evaluates how effectively education, health, and social care partners work together to improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND aged 0-25. Education settings are sampled as part of inspectors' evidence gathering.

Education settings are sampled to help inspectors understand how the SEND system operates in practice across Hampshire.

This Local Area SEND Inspection is about impact, not compliance. Inspectors will focus on:

- Experiences of children and young people with SEND and how needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely way.
- Impact of support and provision
- Whether children and young people achieve positive outcomes and are prepared well for adulthood
- Whether children and families participate meaningfully in planning and decision making
- Whether children and young people are visible, valued and included in their communities
- How effectively education settings work with the Local Area Partnership to plan, evaluate and improve services through multi-agency working

Education settings should be ready to:

- Explain what they do to support children and young people with SEND
- Demonstrate how they know support is making a difference
- Explain how they contribute to the SEND Local Area Partnership
- Demonstrate effective partnership working with health, social care and families
- Show how children, young people and families are involved in decision making

## **1. Your Role as an Education Setting**

This includes all education settings from 0-25 including Early Years settings and nurseries within schools, Mainstream schools, Special schools, Alternative Provision, General Further Education and Post-16 providers, Academy trusts and independent settings where relevant to SEND arrangements

During inspection you may be asked to:

- Contribute, in a timely way, to case sampling for selected tracked learners providing insight into current pathways and impacts
- Attend meetings or case discussions about individual tracked learners, that you work directly with, selected by Inspectors
- Meet with inspectors as part of thematic discussions about elements of the SEND System
- Host inspectors on your site to review provisions and see your work with SEND children and young people in action
- Obtain consent and support children, young people and families participating in inspection activity from your settings
- Explain how your setting contributes to Hampshire's SEND Local Area Partnership
- Explain how you use and promote the Local Offer
- Disseminate surveys to staff, parents, carers and young people

Inspectors may contact settings with little notice and visits may occur on the same day or next day.

## **2. What You Must Be Ready to Demonstrate**

### **A. Identification and Assessment of Need**

Inspectors will explore:

- Early identification of SEND
- Use of the graduated approach to SEN Support, including implementation of Ordinarily Available Provision
- Timeliness of assessment and development of Individual Learner Plans (SEN Support Plans) and Education Health and Care Plans
- Quality of decision making in the implementation of support plans

- How progress is reviewed and needs reassessed when circumstances change
- How concerns are escalated when required

## **B. Quality of SEND Support**

You should be able to demonstrate:

- Inclusive practice, including “Our Approach to Inclusion” and Ordinarily Available provision implementation in your setting.
- Adaptive teaching approaches
- The use of appropriate interventions based on need
- Effective deployment of additional support at the right level when needed
- Consistent implementation of SEN Support and EHCP provision
- Strong preparation for transitions and next stages of education or adulthood

## **C. Co-production and Family Engagement**

Inspectors will want to understand:

- How children and young people influence decisions in your setting, and how they are engaged in support planning (including annual reviews).
- How parents and carers are involved in day-to-day arrangements
- How concerns raised by children, young people and families are listened to and acted upon
- How feedback informs improvement across your setting and practice

You should be able to provide real life examples of genuine involvement and co-production.

## **D. Multi-Agency Working**

Inspectors will explore:

- How your education setting works and plans jointly with health and social care
- How children and young people are supported to participate in annual reviews
- Multi-agency and family contributions to EHC needs assessments
- Effectiveness of information sharing
- How well your education setting works in partnership around complex cases

Be ready with practical, real-life examples of collaborative working.

## **E. Impact on Outcomes**

Inspectors will ask what difference your support has made, how you know and what evidence you have to demonstrate improved outcomes.

Be ready to discuss:

- Attendance
- Participation
- Progress and attainment
- Independence
- Social and emotional outcomes
- Successful transitions
- Preparation for adulthood outcomes where relevant

## **3. Tracked Learners**

Inspectors select a number of children and young people as tracked learners, this requires a deep dive into individual cases through a multi-agency audit. This will be followed by meetings between inspectors, children, young people and families, and the professionals who work most closely with that child or young person. For example, the most appropriate person may be a Teaching Assistant or Key Worker rather than the Headteacher. Tracked learner cases are led by a named professional who will coordinate evidence and gain consent from the family, the lead will contact the education setting that the child or young person attends to request information with a very short turn around to coordinate the multi-agency review.

Education settings may be asked to:

- Contribute information about individuals rapidly (within the same working day)
- Share chronology, records and assessments on file
- Attend in-person and online meetings with inspectors about your practice and individual children and young people known to you
- Explain support provided and discuss decisions and outcomes
- Demonstrate effective and timely partnership working around the child or young person

Inspectors are interested in the child's journey and lived experience, not simply documentation therefore they will want to talk to those working directly with children and young people.

Inspectors will also select a range of other settings to visit; settings should prepare even you are not supporting a tracked learner

#### **4. Surveys and Engagement**

During Week 1, surveys are issued for parents and carers; children and young people and professionals.

Education settings should:

- Share surveys promptly with parents/carers and children and young people in their settings.
- Maximise participation by directly emailing surveys and potentially providing support and time for children and young people with SEND to engage.
- Promote the Local Area Partnership and Local Area SEND Inspection to prepare parents/carers and children and young people, there are a range of tools to signpost too on the [Local Offer](#).
- Complete professional surveys and share with colleagues in your setting and across the SEND System
- Encourage honest responses from everyone engaging.

Survey evidence forms part of inspectors' evidence base prior to their onsite visits.

#### **5. Practical Expectations During Inspection**

**You must:**

- Respond quickly to information requests
- Ensure key staff can be contacted and made available for meetings with inspectors
- Ensure SEN Support and EHCP learners records are up to date and available
- Support access to tracked learner evidence via information sharing and attendance at required meetings.
- Facilitate meetings for inspectors to visit your site as required

**You should:**

- Speak honestly and confidently, keeping the child at centre of your responses

- Focus on impact rather than process, and use real life examples
- Be confident in redirecting questions to someone better placed to respond if required / saying you don't know but are happy to find the information being requested
- Explain improvement work openly where challenges remain

People attending meetings with inspectors will be invited to pre and post de-brief meetings with the Local Authority Inspection Logistics team to ensure you are comfortable and confident with engagements.

## **6. Likely Questions Education Settings May Be Asked**

- How do you identify SEND early, track progress of support, monitor outcomes and improve working in your setting?
- How does your setting contribute to the SEND Local Area Partnership's vision, values and principles and contribute to strategic improvement?
- How are children, young people and parents involved in decisions and listened to in your setting?
- How do you work with health services, social care, community and voluntary organisations to contribute to EHC process?
- How do you use the Local Offer and signpost children, young people and families to it?

## **7. Top Tips for Education Staff**

- Keep answers simple and child centred.
- Focus on impact rather than activity, showcasing an understanding of the experiences of children and young people with SEND.
- Know your data but explain the real-life stories behind it
- Use specific examples, not jargon
- Understand the Hampshire Local Area Partnership and how your setting contributes to local priorities.
- Be familiar with the Local Offer.
- Be honest about strengths and areas for development and demonstrate how improvement activity is making a difference.

## 8. Key Messages

- This is a SEND system inspection, not a school inspection. Health, social care and education work together with children, young people and families to improve services (the SEND Local Area Partnership) – no one service works alone
- Inspectors are interested in lived experience and outcomes.
- Inspection is about continuous improvement, not perfection.
- Inspectors want to know about the impact of your work on children and young people with SEND.
- Your voice, and the voice of children and young people, is critical evidence. Inspectors are interested in lived experience of the system.
- Every interaction contributes to the overall judgment
- Be clear, be honest, and keep the child at the centre of every answer.