

Are your trainees well prepared?

Sustainable SEND training for the next generation of teachers needs to be provided says **Emma Hollis**

Ever since the Carter Review of Initial Teacher Training (<https://bit.ly/2H1msYY>) in 2015, which reminded us that “good teaching for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) is good teaching for all children”, practitioners and policy-makers have highlighted the variability in coverage of SEND in Initial Teacher Training (ITT) in this country.

It is clear, however, that the need for thorough, sustainable SEND training is greater than ever. An alarming number of teachers feel unprepared or unsupported to teach pupils with SEND (<https://bit.ly/3jRFGhT>), which raises

journeys – but it reinforces what we know about SEND training in ITT: that it is highly inconsistent.

The issue has been that there is a lack of expertise among ITT providers: School-Centred ITT (SCITT) providers, School Direct Lead Schools and higher education institutions specialising in teacher training, to develop structured and sustainable programmes with a clear SEND input. But the provision of meaningful SEND training for trainee teachers is something we take very seriously, and ITT providers need support in equipping a new generation of teachers with the skills and knowledge to teach well for SEND.

nasen (National Association for Special Educational Needs) to offer SEND support, resources and guidance to ITT providers. We re-launched this in September to provide more scope for the continuing development of SEND training for trainee teachers, and ensure trainees can work effectively with every pupil. Our toolkit is broken down into 12 bespoke areas:

- **SEND legislation, relation to Teachers’ Standards**

– covering the three most important pieces of statutory legislation and guidance on SEND: Equality Act (2010), Children and Families Act (2014) and SEND Code of Practice (2015).

- **Identification and the graduated approach** – focusing on developing understanding of different types and purposes of assessment, and how they will inform knowledge of an individual pupil’s needs. This is then considered in the context of the graduated approach cycle of assess, plan, do and review.

- **The role of the SENCo and class/subject teachers** – providing an overview of the roles, there are practical applications for delivery as a teacher which are based on the Teachers’ Standards, SEND Code of Practice and other relevant documents.

- **Broad areas of need** – as described in the SEND Code of Practice. For example, it is important to understand that “the purpose of identification is to work out what action the school needs to take, not to fit a pupil into a category”.

- **Working in partnership** – learning about why establishing effective working relationships with parents is important, some of the barriers that can prevent this happening, and practical strategies that can be used to overcome these barriers including consideration of person-centred practice.

- **Classroom strategies** – as recommended for all learners and particularly for those with SEND. Those outlined in this section are highlighted as strategies, or types of teaching technique, which are evidence informed.

- **Differentiation** – what it is and is not, when and how it is best applied and its relationship with adaptive teaching, as well as the provision of different types or levels of teaching strategies/ support/resources for different

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urgent questions about the suitability and accessibility of existing training and CPD. Typically, exit interviews and the Newly-Qualified Teacher (NQT) survey reveal that trainee confidence is weakest in terms of their ability to teach children with a range of needs.

You could argue that this is unsurprising – I would be suspicious of any experienced teacher who could honestly say they had high confidence in managing every possible need they might encounter, never mind trainee teachers and NQTs who are just embarking on their

Our experience has been that there is huge support among providers for the idea of high-quality SEND training, but with a crammed Initial Teacher Education (ITE) curriculum it can be difficult to know what can be achieved and how best to achieve. ITT providers therefore need help around the ‘how to’ and explore wider principles with their trainees, with the understanding that learning is never complete.

To further support this important agenda we have developed a SEND toolkit, designed in partnership with

