

Special School Banding Descriptors

Band 1: Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)

Pupils with this type of need have moderate learning difficulties or some developmental delay in learning.

These pupils:

- have attainment significantly below expected levels in most areas of the curriculum, despite appropriate intervention. Their needs will not be able to be met by normal differentiation and the flexibilities of the national curriculum in a mainstream school.
- require additional educational provision to help them to access the curriculum.
- have much greater difficulty than their peers in acquiring basic literacy, numeracy and social skills. Their understanding of concepts is poor. They may also have associated speech and language delay, low self-esteem and low levels of concentration.
- require varying levels of inter-agency co-operation and planning.
- require additional support in many areas of the curriculum to acquire basic learning skills and social competencies. This may be in the form of advice from specialist services and carried out by school staff.

Curriculum Design & Delivery	Context: Staffing Ratio & Setting	Specialist Support, Training & Expertise	Specialist Resources & Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These pupils can access the national curriculum provided that it is significantly differentiated and personalised. As a result they will make progress in small steps. Concepts and abstract ideas have to be taught repeatedly and rehearsed in other contexts. This will help them to generalise skills across a number of different social contexts. • The core curriculum for a pupil with moderate learning difficulties is a key skills approach emphasising literacy, numeracy and PHSCEE across all subject areas to promote the development of communication. • Pupils will benefit from access to community resources in order to support teaching and generalise learning. • Pupils with moderate learning difficulties will attain the lower national curriculum levels. Attainment at key stage 4 will be typically evidenced by Entry Level Certificates, Unit Awards and ASDAN. Some pupils with particular and specific competencies in individual subject areas may 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These pupils will need access to general and subject specialised learning enrichments that take account of size of room, storage, acoustics and lighting. • Individual rooms will need to be available for therapies such as music, SAL etc. • Some pupils may require mentoring and/or counselling, which will require appropriate accommodation. • Significant health and safety measures throughout the site and buildings. • Rooms adapted to provide for additional SEN needs, e.g. for sensory impairment. High risk practical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct teaching by teachers with appropriate specialist experience and SEN qualifications. • A support staff team who have relevant skills, experience and training for meeting SEN. • Support from a range of therapists and/or external agencies will be by means of advice and programmes of support being carried out by a teacher or TA in school. • Staff trained in specific special educational needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ICT equipped environment and facilities. • Transport in order to access the wider curriculum. • Access to advice and/or short-term intervention from therapists and/or other services. • Adapted play equipment for recreational use.

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<p>successfully secure accreditation through GCSE examinations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils with moderate learning difficulties will require a focus on an holistic approach with an emphasis on practical approaches and programmes of study.	<p>areas may require higher staff to pupil ratios.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resource to enable a staff to pupil ratio of up to 1:10.		
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Band 2: Moderate Learning Difficulties with Additional Needs (MLDAN)

Pupils with this type of need have a significant and general low level of attainment and progress, but with other significant factors in addition to low cognitive ability, which impact significantly on their ability to learn and make progress. These factors may include one or a combination of the following: social or emotional difficulties, ASD, ADHD, LAC with attachment disorder, physical or sensory difficulties, and/or speech, language and communication difficulties. Some pupils may also have additional difficulties in terms of personal care needs.

These pupils:

- have attainment significantly below expected levels in most areas of the curriculum, despite appropriate intervention. Their needs will not be able to be met by normal differentiation and the flexibilities of the national curriculum in a mainstream school.
- require additional educational provision to help them to access the curriculum.
- have much greater difficulty than their peers in acquiring basic literacy, numeracy and social skills. Their understanding of concepts is poor. They may also have associated speech and language delay, low self-esteem and low levels of concentration.
- require significantly high levels of long-term inter-agency co-operation and planning.
- require additional support (in small groups and even 1:1) in many areas of the curriculum to acquire basic learning skills and social competencies. This will be in the form of long-term adaptive programmes carried out by specialist support staff.

All the MLD descriptors plus:

Curriculum Design & Delivery	Context: Staffing Ratio & Setting	Specialist Support, Training & Expertise	Specialist Resources & Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional developmental programmes to address additional personal difficulties, including behavioural programmes and SAL work. These will often be delivered via 1:1 support. • Opportunities to broaden experience through a wide range of links across and throughout the curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some pupils will require specific specialist mentoring and/or counselling, which will require appropriate accommodation and in extreme cases 1:1 staffing. • A secure and safe environment challenging and supportive of individual and group needs. • Enhanced staffing for out of school activities. • Resource to enable a staff to pupil ratio of up to 1:5 with classes of no more than ten and higher staffing ratios for high risk practical areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapeutic support: SALT, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, multi-agency team, medical support, school nurse, social services, educational and clinical psychology, sensory impairment, music therapy, Connexions, EBP etc. These interventions will need to be planned and carried out by specialist support staff. This may include care plans. • Staff trained in specialist approaches, including supporting pupils with additional medical needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to therapies with long-term support programmes carried out by specialist support staff.

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Band 3: Autistic Spectrum Disorders with Moderate Learning Difficulties (ASDMLD)

Pupils with this type of need have an autistic spectrum disorder as their primary need. In addition, they have low cognitive ability. Their ASD impacts significantly on how they learn and make progress.

These pupils:

- require a learning environment that reflects their need for a structured approach.
- have much greater difficulty than their peers in acquiring social interaction and social communication skills, and skills in engaging with others. They have associated difficulties with self-image that may challenge the teaching and learning relationship, reflecting their rigidity of thought.
- have attainment significantly below expected levels in most areas of the curriculum, despite appropriate intervention. Their needs will not be able to be met by normal differentiation and the flexibilities of the national curriculum in a mainstream school.
- require additional educational provision to help them to access the curriculum.
- have much greater difficulty than their peers in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. Their understanding of and ability to develop concepts is poor. They need help to generalise all skills across environments.
- require significantly high levels of long-term inter-agency co-operation and planning.
- require additional support (in small groups and even 1:1) in many areas of the curriculum to acquire social competencies and basic learning skills. This will be in the form of long-term adaptive programmes carried out by specialist staff and support agencies.

All the MLD and MLDAN descriptors plus:

Curriculum Design & Delivery	Context: Staffing Ratio & Setting	Specialist Support, Training & Expertise	Specialist Resources & Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A structured teaching approach to deliver the curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils will require opportunities for whole group, small group, 1:1 teaching and independent work throughout the day. • Pupils need specialist learning environments that provide physical and visual structures. • Resources to enable a staff to pupil ratio of up to 1:2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct teaching by teachers with appropriate specialist training and experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to sensory facilities, sensory circuits etc.

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Band 3: Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)

Pupils with this type of need have severe cognitive impairments, which have a major effect on their ability to participate in the school curriculum. They are likely to have associated difficulties in mobility and co-ordination, communication, and the acquisition of personal and social independence skills.

These pupils need significant support in all areas of the curriculum. They require an approach to teaching that utilises the national curriculum as a medium through which priority areas of learning needs are met. The approaches to teaching and learning require significant adaptations and additions in as much as the curriculum cannot feasibly be replicated or delivered within the mainstream setting. The teachers working with these pupils require specialist training in order to understand and meet significant learning needs. The effective delivery of service for these pupils and their families requires multi-agency co-operation and planning.

Curriculum Design & Delivery	Context: Staffing Ratio & Setting	Specialist Support, Training & Expertise	Specialist Resources & Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils access a core skill curriculum comprising: communication, language and literacy; problem solving and numeracy; physical development; and personal, social and emotional development. • Concepts and skills must be taught systematically in multiple contexts. There is strong emphasis on pupil transference of skills across real life settings. • Access to community resources (including the sharing of selected and highly differentiated learning experiences with mainstream peers) is required in order to support teaching and generalise functional learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils need specialist learning environments that allow adequate floor space, storage, acoustics and lighting. • Specialist teaching facilities will include: one-to-one teaching areas, music therapy room, therapy rooms (OT/PT/SLT), and secure, stimulating and adapted outdoor play areas. • Significant health and safety measures are required throughout the design and operational use of the site and buildings. • Resources to allow a staff to pupil ratio of up to 1:2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily one-to-one and small group teaching by teachers with appropriate specialist training, qualifications and experience. • A classroom support staff team with relevant skills, experience and training. • Regular therapy support in order to ensure an integrated education/therapy provision will include: SLT, OT, physiotherapy and music therapy. • Multi-agency support: medical, social worker, community nurse and educational psychology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapted and specialised classroom teaching and learning resources. • Some pupils will require access to: soft play areas, interactive light and sound rooms, hydrotherapy pool and communication rooms. • Some pupils will require: specialised furniture and communication aids (high and low tech AAC). • ICT equipped environments and facilities, and mobility and fine-motor aids. • Some pupils will require adapted transport in order to access the wider curriculum.

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Band 3: Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)

This level of behaviour, emotional and social difficulties covers a wide range of SEN. It can include children and young people with emotional disorders, conduct disorders, hyperkinetic disorders, including attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD), and children and young people whose behavioural difficulties may be less obvious, for example, those with anxiety who self-harm, have school phobia or depression, and those whose behaviour or emotional well-being are seen to be deteriorating.

There need not be a medical diagnosis for a child or young person to be identified as having BESD, though a diagnosis may provide pointers for the appropriate strategies to manage and minimize the impact of the condition. Learning difficulties can arise for children and young people with BESD, because their difficulties can affect their ability to cope with school routines and relationships. Pupils with BESD cover the full range of ability. However, their difficulties are likely to be a barrier to learning and to persist, despite the implementation of an effective school behaviour policy, and personal and social curriculum.

BESD is a learning difficulty where children and young people demonstrate features of emotional and behavioural difficulties such as: being withdrawn or isolated, disruptive and disturbing; being hyperactive and lacking concentration; having immature social skills; or presenting challenging behaviours arising from other complex special needs. Learning difficulties can arise for children and young people with BESD, because their difficulties can affect their ability to cope with school routines and relationships. Pupils may be defiant, wandering into corridors and attracting other pupils to join them.

These pupils require:

- additional support (small group and even 1:1) in many areas of the curriculum to acquire basic learning skills and social competencies. This will be in the form of long-term adaptive programmes carried out by specialist support.
- significantly higher levels of long-term inter-agency co-operation and planning.

Curriculum Design & Delivery	Context: Staffing Ratio & Setting	Specialist Support, Training & Expertise	Specialist Resources & Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils require a curriculum that covers a large ability range with significant elements of individual planning, which requires frequent individual support to engage in learning. • Attainment may be age appropriate, so access to examination courses will be required, if necessary. This will be supported by opportunities to develop vocational skills. • Pupils require additional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils need specialist learning environments that take account of size of room, storage, acoustics and lighting. • Pupils require the continuous individual input of an adult for around 40%-50% of their time in school for planning, teaching, learning resourcing, management or care. • Resources to allow a staff to pupil ratio of up to 1:3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct teaching by teachers with appropriate specialist experience and qualifications. This must be highly practicable in routine and timetable with facilities for withdrawal, if necessary, for flexible periods of time. • A support staff team with relevant skills, experience and training in a multi-agency team. • Staff must be trained to react appropriately to emergency situations, including 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some pupils will require specialised furniture. • Opportunities to develop vocational skills.

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programmes to address personal difficulties, including behavioural programmes and SEAL work.		physical interventions. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some therapeutic support.• Support for parent programmes.	
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Band 4: Severe Learning Difficulties with Additional Needs (SLDAN)

Pupils with this type of need have severe cognitive, sensory and/or physical impairments, which have a major effect on their ability to engage in the process of learning. They are highly likely to have associated difficulties in the development of communicative competence and may display behaviours that become secondary barriers to learning. (This sector of pupils will include groups such as those with a clinical diagnosis of MSI or ASD with SLD.)

These pupils need significant support in all areas of the curriculum. They require an approach to teaching that utilises the national curriculum as a medium through which priority areas of learning needs are met. The approaches to teaching and learning require significant adaptations and additions in as much as the curriculum cannot be effectively delivered within the mainstream setting. The teachers working with these pupils require highly specialist and some mandatory training in order to understand and meet significantly complex learning needs. The effective delivery of service for these pupils and their families requires a high level of multi-agency co-operation and planning.

All the SLD descriptors plus:

Curriculum Design & Delivery	Context: Staffing Ratio & Setting	Specialist Support, Training & Expertise	Specialist Resources & Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to engage actively in learning these pupils require a very high level of daily one-to-one and small group teaching. • For some pupils, access to community resources (including the sharing of selected and highly differentiated learning experiences with mainstream peers) is required in order to support teaching and generalise functional learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils need specialist learning environments that allow adequate and appropriate floor space, storage, acoustics, lighting and colour contrast. • Specialist teaching facilities will include: one-to-one teaching areas, music therapy room, therapy rooms (OT/PT/SLT), medical rooms, and secure, stimulating and adapted outdoor play areas. • Resources to allow a staff to pupil ratio of up to 1:1.5. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct teaching by teachers with appropriate specialist training, mandatory MSI qualifications and relevant experience. • Intensive therapy support in order to ensure an integrated approach will include: SLT, OT, physiotherapy and music therapy. • Multi-agency support: medical; social worker, educational psychology and specialist CAMHS team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft play areas, interactive light and sound rooms, hydrotherapy pool and communication rooms. • Specialised furniture. • Communication aids (high and low tech AAC). • ICT equipped environments and facilities. • Mobility and fine-motor aids. Most pupils will require adapted transport in order to access the wider curriculum.

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Band 4: Severe Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (SBESD)

For this level of behaviour, emotional and social difficulties, the nature, frequency, persistence, severity and abnormality of the difficulties and their cumulative effect on the child or young person's behaviour and/or emotional well-being are more severe than for BESD. These pupils are some of the most vulnerable in the education system. There is a need to provide a therapeutic environment with access to a multidisciplinary team which has the skills to provide the interventions or therapies as indicated by assessment.

These pupils require:

- additional support (frequently 1:1) in many areas of the curriculum to acquire basic learning skills and social competencies. This will be in the form of long-term adaptive programmes carried out by specialist support.
- significantly higher levels of long-term inter-agency co-operation and planning.
- a specially designed curriculum.

Curriculum Design & Delivery	Context: Staffing Ratio & Setting	Specialist Support, Training & Expertise	Specialist Resources & Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils require a curriculum with significant elements of individual planning, which requires constant individual support to engage in learning. • Pupils require specially adapted programmes to meet individual needs. • The emphasis is on structured help to raise confidence and self-esteem, increase concentration and independence, communicate more effectively, and grasp social/behavioural norms. • Highly predictable routines are essential with specific activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils need very close and constant individual support for care, and health and safety needs, which may require more than one adult. • Access to a multidisciplinary team which has the skills to provide the interventions or therapies as indicated by assessment. • Resources to allow a staff to pupil ratio of 1:1.5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff must be trained to react appropriately to emergency situations, including physical interventions. • Specific interventions in social and problem solving skills with emotional regulation. • Specific interventions or therapies as indicated by assessment. • Parent support programmes that are linked with social skills and problem-solving skills programmes for young people and their families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities to withdraw pupils from the classroom to a safe area. • Opportunities to develop vocational skills.

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Band 5: Severe Learning Difficulties with Severe Behavioural, Social and Emotional Needs (SLD/SBSEN)

Pupils with this type of need have severe cognitive, sensory and/or physical impairments, which have a major effect on their ability to engage in the process of learning. In addition they are likely to have additional social and communication difficulties, frequently displaying behaviours that become significant barriers to learning and may place themselves or others at significant risk of physical or emotional harm (This group of pupils will include individuals with a clinical diagnosis of severe ASD, behavioural difficulties associated with some forms of epilepsy, severe emotional disturbance and/or those with psychotic disorders or other mental health conditions.)

These pupils need very high levels of support in all areas of the curriculum to remain safe in the physical and social environment. They require an approach to teaching that utilises curriculum content as a medium through which priority areas of learning needs are met. The approaches to teaching and learning require highly specialised adaptations and additions in as much as it may not be possible to deliver such an individualised curriculum alongside other learners. These pupils may require a specially adapted learning environment designed to respond to their individual needs. The teachers working with these pupils require highly specialised skills and training in order to understand and meet highly complex learning needs. The effective delivery of services for these pupils and their families requires a very high level of multi-agency co-operation and planning.

All the SLD descriptors plus:

Curriculum Design & Delivery	Context: Staffing Ratio & Setting	Specialist Support, Training & Expertise	Specialist Resources & Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order to engage safely in learning these pupils require a very high level of daily individual and where possible carefully managed small group teaching. For some pupils, access to community resources to support teaching and generalise functional learning (including the sharing of selected and highly differentiated learning experiences with peers) will require careful planning and assessment of potential risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils require very close and constant individual support, care and supervision to manage their safety, will require more than two adults for a significant proportion of the day. Pupils need individualised learning environments that allow adequate and appropriate floor space, storage, acoustics, lighting and colour contrast. Specialist teaching facilities may include: one-to-one teaching areas, therapy rooms (OT/PT/SLT/music), medical support, and secure, stimulating and adapted individual outdoor play areas. Band 4 staffing ratio with additional resource to enable full time TA support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff trained to respond appropriately in emergency situations, including physical interventions Direct teaching by teachers with appropriate specialist training, and experience. Intensive therapy support in order to ensure an integrated approach will include: SLT, OT, physiotherapy and music therapy. Multi-agency support: medical; social worker, educational psychology and specialist CAMHS team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapted learning environment to respond to individual needs Soft play areas, interactive light and sound rooms, hydrotherapy pool and communication rooms. Specialised furniture. Communication aids (high and low tech AAC). ICT equipped environments and facilities. Mobility and fine-motor aids. Most pupils will require adapted or individual transport in order to access the wider curriculum.

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Band 5: Severe Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs (SSEBD)

For pupils with this level of need the level of behaviour, emotional and social difficulties, the nature, frequency, persistence, severity and abnormality of the difficulties and their cumulative effect on the child or young person's behaviour and/or emotional well-being have a major effect on their ability to engage in the process of learning. In addition they are likely to have additional social and communication difficulties, frequently displaying behaviours that become significant barriers to learning and may place themselves or others at significant risk of physical or emotional harm.

These pupils need very high levels of support in all areas of the curriculum to remain safe in the physical and social environment. They require an approach to teaching that utilises curriculum content as a medium through which priority areas of learning needs are met. The approaches to teaching and learning require highly specialised adaptations and additions in as much as it may not be possible to deliver such an individualised curriculum alongside other learners. The staff working with these pupils require highly specialised skills and training in order to understand and meet highly complex learning needs. The effective delivery of services for these pupils and their families requires a very high level of multi-agency co-operation and planning.

All the SBESD Band 4 descriptors plus:

Curriculum Design & Delivery	Context: Staffing Ratio & Setting	Specialist Support, Training & Expertise	Specialist Resources & Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils will require an entire curriculum adapted to meet their individual needs. For parts of their learning pupils will need to focus on social and emotional skills. • For some pupils, access to alternative educational opportunities to support their educational interests and needs. • Access to a highly specialised SEAL curriculum supporting the individual identified needs of the learner. • Specialised programme of learning linked to specific activities which are time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils require very close and constant individual support, care and supervision to manage their safety, which will require more than two adults for a significant proportion of the day. • Referral to, and engagement with, multidisciplinary therapeutic team; resulting in an initial assessment and identified programme of support. • Band 4 staffing ratio with additional resource to enable full time TA support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff trained to respond appropriately in emergency situations, including physical interventions • Direct teaching by teachers with appropriate specialist training, and experience. • Intensive therapy support in order to ensure an integrated approach. Will involve engagement with multi-disciplinary therapeutic team and liaison with other professionals' e.g. YOT, EWS, Police, social worker, and specialist CAMHS team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapted learning environment to respond to individual needs • Specialised furniture. • ICT equipped environments and facilities. • Resourced curriculum to reflect individual learning needs and styles

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focused, and monitored on a daily basis, involving the family / carers and a range of professionals with clearly identified outcomes.			
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Band 6

A small number of pupils require additional TA support to enable them to access all of what is set out in the descriptors for Band 5. Enhanced funding will be provided for these pupils to recognise this and reflect the additional resources currently being allocated to support them. In a very small number of cases a greater level of resource may be required, and this will be allocated on assessed need which will include assessments from the specialist services in Health and Social Care, and agreed through panel as required. This would be difficult to allocate through a formula as the additional support required varies significantly.