

Summer-born children unfairly labelled as having special needs

Beneath these numbers lie real children and families. The past decade's SEND system reforms have not improved their experiences.

- Dr Tammy Campbell

Source: The London School of Economics and Political Science

<https://www.lse.ac.uk/News/Latest-news-from-LSE/2021/f-June-21/Summer-born-children-unfairly-labelled-as-having-special-educational-needs>

Date: TUE 01 JUN 2021

Summary:

- Summer-born children are being unfairly labelled by primary schools as having Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND). For example, nearly half of summer-born boys are categorised as having SEND by primary schools, the paper says, creating needless anxiety for children and parents
- Using National Pupil Database (NPD) census records for over 6 million children who were in state primary schools over the years 2008-2018, Dr Tammy Campbell found that among children reaching Year 6 in 2018, 16% of autumn-born girls had been attributed SEND Support at some point during primary school, compared to 26% of summer-born girls, 28% of autumn-born boys, and 40% of summer-born boys
- Dr Campbell, Assistant Research Professor at LSE's Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, argues that England's rigid early testing and curriculum regimes are inappropriate, particularly for younger children. She explains that they are set up to sort children into the 'expected' and 'good' who 'meet standards,' and those who are deficient. This results in over-attribution to summer-borns of SEND, and contributes to "inequalities, inefficiencies and insufficiencies" within a dysfunctional SEND system

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tammy_Campbell2

Ofsted Research and analysis

Supporting SEND: a summary for children and young people

Source: Ofsted

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-send/supporting-send-a-summary-for-children-and-young-people>

Date: Updated 13 May 2021

Ofsted have published [research into the experiences of 21 children in English schools](#).

Summary:

- There are roughly 1.4 million children with a special educational need (SEN) in England. Many children and young people who have a SEN may also have a disability (SEND)
- Schools must make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled children so that they are not left out of education
- It is really important to identify special educational needs as early as possible. One problem is that professionals across the country assess and identify needs in many different ways
- Most pupils who are identified as having a special educational need are classed as requiring 'SEN support'. This support is usually given by schools

Recommendations:

- Staff should know the pupils well. They should put the pupil first when they were identifying the pupil's needs and planning. Schools must match the curriculum to the needs of pupils with SEND.
- It is important that schools teach the curriculum in the right order so that pupils with SEND can master what they most need to know before moving on
- Staff should focus on pupils' strengths to build confidence and independence. Pupils should feel included
- Where possible, pupils should receive any interventions inside the classroom. This will ensure that they are not missing learning opportunities and that they might get all the high-quality teaching that they need to have a chance of succeeding. By doing this it ensures that there is the same ambition for all children
- As TAs play such an important role in the education of children and young people with SEND, it is vital that they have good curriculum knowledge. It is important that they get support from teachers and access to the right training to help build their subject expertise
- Schools should develop positive and trusting relationships with parents and carers. Schools should work with parents and carers to create plans for the pupils. Schools

should use the information that parents shared to more accurately identify the pupil's needs

- Schools should encourage families to communicate information through both formal and informal channels. Parents and carers should feel well supported by individual members of staff

Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools

Date: March 2020

Source: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/send>

Summary:

Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) have the greatest need for excellent teaching and are entitled to provision that supports achievement at, and enjoyment of, school. The attainment gap between pupils with SEND and their peers is twice as big as the gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers. However, pupils with SEND are also more than twice as likely to be eligible for free school meals.

The guidance report offers five evidence-based recommendations to support pupils with SEND, providing a starting point for schools to review their current approach and practical ideas they can implement.

Recommendation 1

Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils without exception

An inclusive school removes barriers to learning and participation, provides an education that is appropriate to pupils' needs, and promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential for all pupils. Schools should:

- promote positive relationships, active engagement, and wellbeing for all pupils
- ensure all pupils can access the best possible teaching
- adopt a positive and proactive approach to behaviour

Recommendation 2

Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs

Schools should aim to understand individual pupil's learning needs using the graduated approach of the 'assess, plan, do, review' approach.

Assessment should be regular and purposeful rather than a one-off event, and should seek input from parents and carers as well as the pupil themselves and specialist professionals.

Teachers need to feel empowered and trusted to use the information they collect to make a decision about the next steps for teaching that child.

Recommendation 3

Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching

To a great extent, good teaching for pupils with SEND is good teaching for all.

Searching for a 'magic bullet' can distract teachers from the powerful strategies they often already possess.

The research suggests a group of teaching strategies that teachers should consider emphasising for pupils with SEND. Teachers should develop a repertoire of these strategies they can use flexibly in response to the needs of all pupils.

- flexible grouping
- cognitive and metacognitive strategies
- explicit instruction
- using technology to support pupils with SEND
- scaffolding

Recommendation 4

Complement high quality teaching with carefully selected small-group and one-to-one interventions

Small-group and one-to-one interventions can be a powerful tool but must be used carefully. Ineffective use of interventions can create a barrier to the inclusion of pupils with SEN.

High quality teaching should reduce the need for extra support, but it is likely that some pupils will require high quality, structured, targeted interventions to make progress.

The intensity of intervention (from universal to targeted to specialist) should increase with need.

Interventions should be carefully targeted through identification and assessment of need.

Recommendation 5

Work effectively with teaching assistants

Effective deployment of teaching assistants (TAs) is critical. School leaders should pay careful attention to the roles of TAs and ensure they have a positive impact on pupils with SEND.

TAs should supplement, not replace, teaching from the classroom teacher.