



National College for
Teaching & Leadership

Specification for Mandatory Qualifications

**For specialist teachers of children and
young people with vision impairments**

For courses starting from September 2014

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Introduction

This specification applies to mandatory qualification (MQ) courses starting from September 2014.

So that children and young people¹ with sensory impairments receive the best quality education and care, teachers of classes of children and young people who are deaf², who have vision impairments (VI)³ and who are deafblind⁴ are required⁵ to hold an additional specialist qualification in addition to qualified teacher status (QTS) or qualified teacher learning and skills (QTLS)⁶. This qualification is known as the mandatory qualification for teachers of pupils with sensory impairments and is designed to prepare teachers⁷ to work effectively with children and young people who are deaf, who have VI or who are deafblind.

There are three versions of the qualification: one for teachers of deaf learners, one for those teaching learners with VI, and one for those teaching learners who are deafblind. Teachers employed to teach classes of children and young people with a sensory impairment who do not already hold an appropriate MQ are required to gain the qualification within their first three years in post.

‘A qualified teacher may be employed to teach a class of pupils who are hearing impaired, visually impaired, or both hearing and visually impaired if the headteacher is satisfied that the person in question is in the process of obtaining the relevant MQ and provided that the aggregate period for which the teacher teaches a class of pupils does not exceed three years.’ [Statutory instrument 2003 No.1662. The Education (School Teachers’ Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003, 9]

Although the requirement to hold an MQ applies only to teachers in specific roles, the appeal of the MQs is much wider. Qualified teachers in support and advisory roles, and

¹ Up to age 25

² Deaf children are defined as all children with sensorineural and permanent conductive deafness, using the descriptors provided by the British Society of Audiology and BATOD. The term ‘deaf’ includes all levels of deafness, from mild to profound’.

People with hearing impairments may have some residual hearing. Hearing impairment is sometimes referred to as ‘deafness’ or ‘hearing loss’.

³ Vision impairment is sometimes referred to as ‘blindness’, ‘partial sightedness’ or ‘sight loss’.

⁴ Deafblind people may have some residual sight and/or hearing. Deafblindness is sometimes referred to as ‘multi-sensory impairment’ (MSI) or ‘dual-sensory loss’

⁵ Statutory Instrument 2003 No.1662, the Education (School Teachers’ Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003.

⁶ Since 1 April 2012, further education teachers who have been awarded QTLS by the Institute for Learning (IfL) and are members of the IfL are recognised as qualified teachers in schools.

⁷ The regulations apply to teachers employed in schools and not specialist peripatetic teachers working with pupils with sensory impairments employed in special educational needs support services. However, the DfE has stated that it is their expectation that such teachers would have the relevant MQ. See text below.

those working with children and young people with VI in home⁸, early years and post-16 settings, are also strongly advised to complete MQ training, in the best interest of the children and young people with whom they work.

*'Those teaching classes of children with sensory impairment **must** hold an appropriate qualification approved by the Secretary of State. Teachers working in an advisory role to support such pupils should also hold the appropriate qualification.'*⁹

All MQ training programmes must meet the minimum specification set out on pages 10 - 14. However, it is expected that some providers will wish to develop additional criteria so as to tailor MQ courses more closely to the needs of participants and other stakeholders.

To be awarded an MQ, the Department for Education (DfE) requires that participants are assessed against – and demonstrate that they meet – the course outcomes. The academic level at which the qualification is validated is entirely a matter for providers. It should not compromise the purposes or quality of the MQ and should be consistent with the expertise required to carry out the role of a qualified teacher of children and young people with VI.

Providing training leading to the award of an MQ

To deliver a course leading to the award of an MQ, training providers must gain the approval of the Secretary of State. Although the type of provider is not stipulated, MQ courses have traditionally been delivered by higher education institutions, working in partnership with others, including local authorities, schools and voluntary bodies.

To become an approved provider of MQ courses, the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL), on behalf of the DfE, periodically invites training providers to seek approval and, if they are interested, submit an application demonstrating how their provision will meet the requirements of the specification and how their course will assist teachers in meeting the course outcomes, including the minimum MQ outcomes. Each application is assessed by a panel, including representatives from the NCTL, DfE and other specialists in the field of special educational needs (SEN) and disability.

It is envisaged that successful providers will receive approval from the Secretary of State to deliver courses leading to the award of MQ for an initial period of five years. Approved MQ provision may be inspected by Ofsted.

⁸ From birth

⁹ DfE (September 2014) Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 years

The MQ specification

This specification was revised following a 'light touch' consultation with existing MQ providers and other key stakeholders during 2013 and 2014. This is to bring the specification up-to-date with recent changes to relevant Government policies and organisational changes since 2009. The revised specification is set out below (pages 10 - 14).

The specification sets out six overarching criteria. Potential MQ course providers must demonstrate in their application for approval how the provision they propose meets each of the criteria. The specific features that applications for approval should cover are listed below in the specification under each criterion. Those reviewing applications will use these statements to determine which providers should be approved to deliver MQ training. To assist those preparing applications for approval against the criteria and to address some of the issues that arose during consultation, a brief introduction to each criterion is set out below.

Criterion 1

MQs should have as their main objective and outcome the raised achievement of children and young people with VI through improving participants' professional knowledge, understanding and skills

Provision should give participants the knowledge, understanding and skills to maximise the opportunities open to children and young people with VI so as to improve their life chances and enable them to fulfil their potential. In this criterion, and throughout the specification, references to the 'achievement' of children and young people should be taken to be broadly defined to include not just academic attainment, but achievement in relation to, for example, physical, mental and emotional well-being; developing confidence and independence; and making a successful transition to adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training, and independent living. The course should also prepare participants to listen to the views of children and young people and to work together with others, including other professionals, parents, carers and families, to protect children and young people and help them to achieve.

MQ courses **must** be strongly rooted in practice and providers should make strong links with mainstream settings, special schools and settings, and sensory support services to help keep provision up to date and relevant to practice. There should be opportunities, in work contexts, for participants to apply, practise and demonstrate what they have learnt.

MQ courses should help prepare participants to work effectively in their current roles (in any phase or context, including in early years and post-16 settings, within mainstream and specialist provision and in support and advisory roles) and must give them opportunities to gain experience of other relevant work contexts, eg through visits, work shadowing and teaching placements.

Criterion 2

MQs should offer high quality training that makes best use of available resources through being tailored to meet participants' training and development needs

The purpose of this criterion is to make the best possible use of the resources available to deliver MQ courses so that they have the maximum impact on participants' practice and the outcomes achieved by the children and young people they teach. Those teaching children and young people with sensory impairments will come from different backgrounds, work in a range of different contexts and have varying knowledge, skills and experience. As a result, participants will have different strengths and training needs in relation to the course outcomes. To ensure that all participants gain maximum benefit from MQ training and that providers make the best use of the resources available to them, provision should be matched as closely as possible to individual needs.

It is important that everyone who joins a course leading to the award of an MQ is able to benefit fully from it. Providers should, therefore, assure themselves that those accepted to join MQ courses have sufficient knowledge, understanding and skills on joining the course to be likely to meet all the course outcomes by the end of the course. Where prospective participants fall below an acceptable entry level in one or more areas, providers should offer them guidance about what they need to do to achieve the required entry level.

Provision should incorporate an initial needs assessment in relation to the course outcomes in order to ensure well-targeted and cost-effective professional development for participants. An initial needs assessment against the course outcomes can help providers to tailor the course to participants' needs. Courses should take full account of participants' prior knowledge and achievement. If a provider is satisfied, at the beginning of an MQ course, that all the participants in the group already meet a particular group of outcomes, then the course need not cover these in great detail, and the time released can be spent looking at other aspects in more detail.

Ultimately, however, all participants must demonstrate that they meet all the course outcomes, and assessors should look for evidence against all the course outcomes throughout the course as an additional check on the accuracy of the needs assessment.

In exceptional circumstances, providers may encounter prospective participants – for example, experienced staff from the independent sector, experienced teachers from SEN services, or those trained overseas – who seem already to meet the course outcomes but do not yet have the qualification. In such cases, providers could have arrangements in place whereby prospective participants can present themselves for assessment without any further training. As with participants on a 'traditional' MQ route, 'assessment-only' candidates will need to be assessed against – and demonstrate that they meet – all the course outcomes before being awarded the qualification. It is a matter for providers themselves to determine how this may best be achieved and what it should cost. For example, it may well be that a provider will consider that an assessed 'placement module' and/or a written assignment is the best way for a prospective participant to demonstrate that he/she already meets the course outcomes. Providers should be aware that, at present, candidates achieving the course outcomes cannot be awarded 'qualified teacher

of visually impaired pupils' status without also gaining a specific higher education award (MQ) approved by the Secretary of State.

MQ courses cannot cover everything that teachers of children and young people with VI will need to know throughout their careers. As with all professional development, completing an MQ is a stepping-stone. MQ providers have a responsibility to ensure that, at the end of the MQ course, participants are helped to identify areas for further development. This does not mean that the MQ provider has to set specific objectives. Objective setting is done in discussion with line managers in the workplace. But providers should emphasise the importance of participants setting objectives for further development, eg by building opportunities to set objectives into the end of courses, providing planning tools, discussing further possibilities and opportunities, and giving participants ideas they can consider and discuss with their managers.

Criterion 3

MQs should be delivered flexibly, without compromising appropriate progression and quality of outcome, to maximise access for participants

This criterion covers aspects of accessibility for all candidates to make it possible for all those needing or wishing to take an MQ to be able to do so.

Providers wishing to offer MQ courses should show in their applications for approval how their courses promote equality of opportunity and good relations by meeting the requirements of relevant equality legislation, including the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA), and the Equality Act 2010. For example, they should show how:

- they are meeting the DDA 'anticipatory duty' by anticipating the needs of disabled candidates/participants and making provision for them
- they will encourage and support candidates/participants to disclose disabilities so that reasonable adjustments can be made
- they will promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- the needs of disabled candidates will be reflected in promotional and pre-course materials for MQ candidates, and
- they will avoid discriminating against disabled participants in selection, during training (including on visits and teaching placements) and in assessment.

Since the majority of MQ participants study part-time, provision should be as flexible as possible without compromising appropriate progression and quality of outcome. The NCTL is aware that there are limits to the amount of flexibility that one provider can achieve, especially where participant numbers are very small. To ensure that courses are as accessible as possible, those reviewing applications for approval will be looking for a range of flexible provision nationally, rather than necessarily within one provider's courses. However, those applying for approval to offer MQ courses must demonstrate that they have done everything they can to make their provision as flexible as they possibly can. Even very small changes can make a considerable difference. For

example, providers could publish information about course dates well in advance to enable participants to attend training without missing important events at their workplace. They could also put key content from taught sessions online so that participants who miss sessions unavoidably are able to catch up, or advertise any crèche provision that might be available.

Criterion 4

MQs should be informed by the needs of stakeholders and involve them in development, delivery, evaluation and improvement of the provision

Stakeholders might include teachers, schools/other settings, employers, local authorities, parents/carers, children and young people, and others such as the relevant SEN associations and groups of disabled people, as well as current and former participants on MQ courses.

In their applications for approval, those wishing to provide MQ training must make clear how they have collected and taken account of evidence about the needs of stakeholders. This does not mean that stakeholders can determine the content of MQ courses. That is largely dictated by the MQ outcomes and the identified needs of participants. However, providers should be clear about what stakeholders feel is important and, wherever possible, should allow this to influence course content.

Those applying for approval to become MQ course providers should also show how stakeholders will be directly or indirectly involved in their provision, eg as guest speakers, as hosts for visiting participants, as tutors or mentors for participants in the workplace, as moderators or assessors, or by giving evidence about the impact of MQ courses.

Criterion 5

MQs should be of a consistently high quality and subject to rigorous quality assurance procedures, and be supported by mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and improving the impact of provision on teachers' competence and the achievement of children and young people with VI

Those applying for approval to become MQ course providers should show how all aspects of provision will be subject to QA measures, including:

- Recruitment and selection
- Needs assessment and setting objectives
- Course content, including workplace-based elements
- Assessment against the course outcomes, and
- Evaluation.

They should show the sources of evidence, and mechanisms for ensuring that information gleaned will affect future planning and development of the content and delivery of provision.

The main purpose of MQ provision must be to raise participants' competence and the achievement of children and young people with VI. The NCTL recognises that it may be difficult to gather evidence on the impact of MQ provision on the achievement of children and young people over the short time that the course runs. Providers should, however, show how they take every opportunity to gather such evidence. They could, for example, encourage participants carrying out assignments to take baseline measures before interventions, and to measure the impact on the achievement of learners with VI following those interventions and over time.

It is essential that candidates are suitable for work with children and young people. As part of their recruitment and selection procedures, providers should assure themselves that those accepted onto MQ courses have had the appropriate background checks to allow them to work with children and young people.¹⁰ The majority of MQ candidates are likely to be employed in posts where they are already working with children and young people at the time of taking the course and, as such, are likely to have undergone the appropriate Disclosure and Banning Service (DBS) enhanced disclosure check. However, if a candidate with QTS or QTLS has not worked in a school or FE college in a post that involves regular contact with children or young people within the past three months, it will be necessary for a DBS enhanced disclosure to be obtained.

Criterion 6

MQs should have, as a minimum requirement for successful completion, the outcomes set out in Annex A of the MQ specification, so that those holding the qualification(s) make maximum impact on practice

Applications from those seeking approval to run MQ courses should demonstrate how the provider will ensure that the MQ is awarded only to candidates who have shown that their knowledge, understanding and skills match the outcomes in Annex A of the specification. These are minimum requirements. Providers may wish to include other outcomes.

¹⁰ As stipulated by The School Staffing (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2006, School Staffing (England) (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 2006, and Further Education (Providers of Education) (England) Regulations 2006.

Specification for courses leading to the mandatory qualification for teachers of children and young people with VI

The national specification is set out below. It has, at its heart, three purposes. These are that mandatory qualifications should:

- Be of a consistently high quality
- Have an impact on raising the achievement and improving the well-being of children and young people, and
- Be easily accessible to those wishing to take them.

Mandatory qualifications should:

1. Have as their main objective and outcome the raised achievement¹¹ of children and young people with VI, through improving participants' professional knowledge, understanding and skills.

Successful applications for approval to run MQ courses will demonstrate that provision will:

- 1.1. Have a clear focus in course aims, objectives, content and assessment on raising the achievement of children and young people and improving their well-being
- 1.2. Make strong links to effective practice in schools and other settings and require participants to apply, practise and demonstrate what they have learnt in an appropriate work context
- 1.3. Be evidence-based, reflecting recent research and inspection evidence and important developments and innovations relating to vision impairment
- 1.4. Develop participants' understanding of current legislation and government policies and initiatives in relation to sensory impairment, and the implications of these for children and young people with VI and the settings in which they are cared for and/or educated
- 1.5. Develop participants' skills in consulting children and young people about issues that affect them individually and collectively and helping them express their views to others

¹¹ Throughout this document the 'achievement' of children and young people should be taken as broadly defined to include not just academic attainment, but achievement in its broadest terms

- 1.6. Develop participants' skills in advising, supporting and collaborating with colleagues and working as part of multi-agency teams to meet the needs of children and young people and their families
- 1.7. Develop participants' skills in advising, supporting and working in partnership with parents/carers and families
- 1.8. Be available, as appropriate, for participants teaching children and young people with VI in any phase or context, including in home, early years and post-16 settings, within mainstream and specialist provision and in support and advisory roles, and equip them with the knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to apply what they have learned more widely, i.e. in different phases or contexts ¹²
- 1.9. Enable participants to make an impact on practice by meeting the course outcomes
- 1.10. Involve rigorous assessment of participants against all of the course outcomes.

2. MQs should offer high quality training that makes best use of available resources through being tailored to meet participants' training and development needs

Successful applications for approval to run MQ courses will demonstrate that:

- 2.1. Arrangements are in place for prior study and/or experience, where participants' needs are best met at that stage, eg where a candidate needs to acquire a baseline of knowledge, skill or experience before starting training
- 2.2. An initial assessment of participants' training and development needs in relation to the course outcomes will inform an individual training plan for each participant, which takes full account of participants' prior knowledge and achievement, and enables each participant to work towards a personalised set of outcomes, eg a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf wishing to retrain as a QTVI should only be required to meet those outcomes specific to vision impairment, which have not been met previously on the MQ for Specialist Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People
- 2.3. In exceptional circumstances, suitably experienced prospective participants, eg experienced staff from the independent sector, experienced teachers from SEN services, or those trained overseas, will be able to present themselves for

¹² Participants must have qualified teacher status (QTS) or qualified teacher learning and skills (QTLS) to be eligible to gain an MQ.

assessment against the course outcomes without any further training. Providers may wish to develop, for example, a formal assessment module through which candidates will demonstrate that they meet all the course outcomes

- 2.4. Provision, including visits and teaching placements, is of high quality, tailored to individuals' circumstances and their training and development needs, promotes progression towards the course outcomes and is cost-effective
- 2.5. Arrangements are in place for those achieving the MQ to be helped to consider further professional objectives.

3. Be delivered flexibly, without compromising appropriate progression and quality of outcome, to maximise access for participants.

Successful applications for approval to run MQ courses will demonstrate that provision will be accessible and flexible, without compromising appropriate progression and quality of outcome, through:

- 3.1. Complying with relevant duties under equalities legislation to enable all participants to access and participate fully in the course, eg making reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates/participants
- 3.2. Flexible course delivery¹³, for example, having opportunities, where appropriate for participants to start their training at different times or to cover training provision in a different order or in different modes, eg taught, blended or e-learning, full-time and part-time
- 3.3. Using ICT effectively in teaching and learning, and to facilitate effective communication, eg to facilitate:
 - Communication between providers and link schools, settings and services
 - Direct tutor support for participants, eg telephone calls, e-mail, forums, videoconferencing, web chat, and
 - Communication and collaborative learning between participants, eg through email, forums or online work groups

¹³ This criterion requires providers to describe how they have addressed flexibility in the delivery of their mandatory qualification provision. It is not expected that provision will include all features given as examples.

4. Be informed by the needs of stakeholders¹⁴ and involve them in development, delivery, evaluation and improvement of the provision.

Successful applications for approval to run MQ courses will demonstrate:

- 4.1. Clear evidence that provision has taken account of the needs of the main stakeholders
- 4.2. Details of how stakeholders have directly or indirectly influenced the development and improvement of provision
- 4.3. Details of how stakeholders will be involved, directly or indirectly, in evaluation and other aspects of provision.

5. Be of a consistently high quality and subject to rigorous quality assurance procedures, and supported by mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and improving the impact of provision on participants' competence and the achievement of children and young people with VI

Applications from those seeking approval to run MQ courses should demonstrate:

- 5.1. The range of internal and external evaluation measures available and how the evidence gathered will be used to improve the quality and impact of provision
- 5.2. That systems are in place to recruit participants onto the course who have sufficient prior knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to benefit from the course, and to meet the course outcomes by the end of the course
- 5.3. That systems are in place, where necessary, to verify that those accepted for MQ training are suitable to work with children and young people
- 5.4. That suitably qualified and experienced staff with up-to-date knowledge and skills in the relevant specialist area are available to deliver the course
- 5.5. That participants have access to a range of specialist expertise and appropriate high-quality teaching placements
- 5.6. That there are sufficient specialist teaching resources relevant to training teachers of children and young people with VI, to enable all participants to reach the course outcomes

¹⁴ Stakeholders in these criteria might include teachers, schools/other settings, employers, local authorities, parents/carers, children and young people, and others such as the relevant SEN associations and groups of disabled people, and current and former participants on MQ courses.

- 5.7. Mechanisms for ensuring that all those involved in delivery and assessment, including on teaching placements, eg regional tutors or mentors, understand their roles and responsibilities and have the time, knowledge, understanding and skills to carry them out to a high standard
 - 5.8. That means are in place to ensure that assessment judgements across provision are consistent, reliable and accurate and that these will be moderated
 - 5.9. Specific evidence and explanation of the methods and measures to be used for evaluating the quality, standards and impact of provision on participants' competence and confidence and the achievement of children and young people, eg regularly requiring participants to evaluate improvements in pupils' achievement as a result of particular aspects of their practice.
- 6. Have, as a minimum requirement for successful completion, the mandatory qualification outcomes (Annex A) so that those holding the qualification(s) make maximum impact on practice.**

Annex A – Minimum mandatory qualifications outcomes

Those awarded a mandatory qualification in teaching children and young people with VI will:

1. Professional qualities and attributes

Knowledge and understanding

Relationships with children and young people and their families

- 1.1. Understand the principles of an Early Support and keyworking approach

Personal professional development

- 1.2. Understand how their own preconceptions and cultural understanding affect their work with learners¹⁵ with VI and their families

Skills

Relationships with children and young people and their families

- 1.3. Have high expectations of the achievement and behaviour learners with VI including a commitment to ensuring that they can achieve their full potential
- 1.4. Establish fair, respectful, trusting, supportive and constructive relationships with children and young people with VI and their families
- 1.5. Respond to the needs of learners with VI in ways appropriate to their age and context, with particular reference to young adults

Personal professional development

- 1.6. Possess the analytical, interpersonal and organisational skills necessary to work in an advisory role with their immediate colleagues and with colleagues in a range of settings
- 1.7. Evaluate their performance and take responsibility for improving their practice through appropriate professional development
- 1.8. Respond positively to support, advice and feedback

¹⁵ The term 'learners' is used instead of 'children and young people' when learning per se is the main focus of the outcome. It refers to all children and young people from birth to age 25

- 1.9. Research and evaluate innovative practices in relation to improving the achievement of learners with VI and draw on research outcomes and other sources of external evidence to inform their own practice and that of colleagues
- 1.10. Know how to take account of cultural and linguistic issues arising from their practice

2. The current legislative and educational framework

Knowledge and understanding

- 2.1. Have a good, current working knowledge and understanding of national legislation, and national and local policies, procedures and guidelines relating to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and, in particular, those with VI
- 2.2. Understand the range of educational provision for learners with VI, including home-based learning, early years settings, mainstream schools, specialised provision, special schools and further and higher education, and the role of support services
- 2.3. Be familiar with statutory and non-statutory curriculum frameworks and their associated assessment criteria and processes and reporting procedures, including those associated with the Early Years Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum, and education and training for learners from 18 to 25
- 2.4. Have a clear understanding of any special arrangements to support access to assessment processes and know how to facilitate appropriate access and support arrangements to enable learners with VI to have their achievements recognised
- 2.5. Have an up-to-date understanding of the statutory assessment process and related codes of practice. Know how these are implemented at a local level and how this affects children and young people with VI
- 2.6. Have a good working knowledge of school/setting self-evaluation and improvement processes, including the mechanisms for setting priorities, objectives and targets and translating these into policies and strategies
- 2.7. Understand current SEN and disability-specific terminology and how it is used in relation to the education, health and care of children and young people with VI
- 2.8. Understand the role of the QTVI in relation to safeguarding and early help assessments

3. Vision and vision impairment

Knowledge and understanding

The visual system

- 3.1 Understand the anatomy and physiology of the eye, how the visual system works and the ways in which the brain processes information in children and young people with VI
- 3.2 Understand how sight develops, the range and causes of sight loss, how vision impairments are identified, and their potential effect on learning
- 3.3 Know the educational implications of the pathology and treatment of eye diseases and conditions

Visual assessment

- 3.4 Know the theory and application of current ophthalmic practice and protocols
- 3.5 Know a range of commonly used clinical and functional procedures for assessing how learners with VI process visual information
- 3.6 Know the principles and practices of assessing functional vision
- 3.7 Know how low vision devices can help a child or young person make effective use of functional vision, the range of available low vision devices and how to use and maintain them appropriately

Developmental implications of vision impairment

- 3.8 Understand the impact of all degrees of vision impairment, including progressive or sudden onset, on the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of learners with VI and on their families
- 3.9 Understand the relationship between vision impairment and the development of communication skills
- 3.10 Know the impact of longstanding communication difficulties on the cognitive, emotional and social development of learners with VI and ways to minimise these
- 3.11 Recognise the specific developmental needs of children and young people with VI and additional or complex needs

Skills

Assessment

- 3.12 Undertake and contribute to the functional assessment of vision, using appropriate tools and observations, and interpreting and drawing on the specialist assessment of others such as orthoptists, ophthalmologists and optometrists
- 3.13 Undertake and contribute to the assessment of communication, using appropriate tools and observations, and interpreting and drawing on the specialist assessment of others such as speech and language therapists
- 3.14 Undertake and contribute to the assessment of cognition and development, using appropriate tools and observations, and interpreting and drawing on the specialist assessment of others such as educational and clinical psychologists

- 3.15 Contribute to statutory assessment processes in line with national legislative requirements

4. Teaching and learning

Knowledge and understanding

The learning environment

- 4.1 Understand the factors that contribute to good environmental design, including good lighting, acoustics and tactile cues
- 4.2 Know a range of resources and techniques that can be used to provide a positive learning environment for learners with VI

Teaching, learning and assessment

- 4.3 Understand the impact of sight loss on the learning and achievement of learners with VI, and how teaching, learning and assessment can be modified to enable them to make good progress
- 4.4 Know appropriate approaches, strategies and interventions to enable learners with VI to acquire key literacy, mathematical and ICT skills, and how to implement these
- 4.5 Know the principles of haptic perception and how to make best use of touch in teaching learners with VI
- 4.6 Know how to make links , where appropriate, between learning and relevant accreditation schemes
- 4.7 Know how to encourage and support learners with VI to be as independent as possible
- 4.8 Know when and how to intervene to support children and young people with VI to communicate with others
- 4.9 Understand the principles of person-centred planning to enable learners with VI and their families to identify short and longer-term goals and to obtain the support they need to achieve them

Skills

The learning environment

- 4.10 Undertake environmental audits to assess and review settings/ classrooms for accessibility and safety
- 4.11 Create safe learning environments that encourage independence and mobility, help develop social interaction, and support the emotional health and well-being of learners with VI

Planning

- 4.12 Anticipate the barriers to learning and participation that may arise for learners with VI, and differentiate/modify teaching approaches and other provision to minimise these
- 4.13 Use the information gained from assessment and other sources to set targets, plan teaching approaches and other provision that will help learners with VI make good progress
- 4.14 Use targets to develop criteria by which to assess and evaluate the progress of learners with VI and to establish a timescale for review and evaluation
- 4.15 Contribute to the design and implementation of a coherent and structured learning programme tailored to the current level of development/communication of individual learners
- 4.16 Apply a graduated approach to support over time, based on a balance between providing access to learning and developing skills of learning to access
- 4.17 Be able to lead person-centred planning and review processes
- 4.18 Write person-centred plans that take account of other planning formats, eg Education, Health and Care Plans, and which support the development of learners with VI, through school and during transition into school, between classes or phases, and from school into adult life

Teaching

- 4.19 Identify individual learning outcomes and develop, implement and evaluate a range of approaches to help learners with VI achieve those outcomes
- 4.20 Select and use the most effective approaches, eg visual, oral/aural, tactile and kinaesthetic, to enhance communication and learning
- 4.21 Differentiate or personalise provision to match and develop the capabilities of learners with VI
- 4.22 Design, produce, modify and adapt teaching and learning materials in an appropriate medium, eg audio, tactile diagrams, braille, enlarged and modified text, simplified diagrams to make them accessible and appropriate to learners with VI
- 4.23 Provide a wide range of opportunities for the development of receptive and expressive language
- 4.24 Enable learners with VI to take increasing responsibility for their own learning by involving them in making decisions about the types and levels of support they receive

Monitoring, assessing and giving feedback

- 4.25 Use appropriate means to monitor the progress of learners with VI and include learners and their parents/carers in assessment process, as appropriate
- 4.26 Monitor the use and effectiveness of specialised approaches, devices, equipment and resources to ensure that they achieve their intended outcomes for learners with VI

Reviewing and reporting

- 4.27 Collate and present the educational implications of multi-disciplinary assessment and parental contributions and views to inform curricular and placement decisions where appropriate
- 4.28 Use provision mapping to determine how well provision for learners with VI matches their needs and to demonstrate accountability to key stakeholders including parents/carers
- 4.29 Provide information on the progress of learners with VI which shows the added value provided by specialist teaching and learning
- 4.30 Prepare and write accurate assessment reports that can be understood and used by teachers, other professionals, parents/carers and, where appropriate, children and young people with VI
- 4.31 Contribute to the strategic review and evaluation of learning and teaching provision in development of school and local offers

5. The specialist curriculum

Knowledge and understanding

- 5.1 Understand the principles underlying the development of alternative and augmented communication systems, including braille and Moon
- 5.2 Know how to teach braille and understand the skills necessary for a child or young person to learn braille
- 5.3 Understand the principles and practice of habilitation, mobility, orientation and independent living
- 5.4 Know a range of ICT hardware and software to help assess the needs of learners with VI and to support their learning

Skills

- 5.5 Demonstrate competence in the contracted literary braille code to agreed national standards
- 5.6 Select and use alternative and augmented communication systems, including tactile code such as braille and Moon, as part of a curriculum to develop learners' skills and understanding
- 5.7 Work with mobility/habilitation specialists to design and implement mobility and independence programmes, including wheelchair mobility
- 5.8 Identify ways of reducing the barriers to learning and participation for learners with VI arising from the physical and social environment, and understand how these may change in different phases of education and at transfer from one setting/school to another
- 5.9 Use specialist equipment and technology to overcome or reduce the impact of sight loss

6 Social, emotional development and well-being

Knowledge and understanding

Promoting positive behaviour

- 6.1 Understand that the language and behaviour of other people, and the physical and social environment can have a strong influence on the emotional and behavioural responses of learners with VI
- 6.2 Know how to build positive relationships with learners with VI and understand how positive relationships can promote good behaviour and self-esteem
- 6.3 Know how to rebuild damaged emotional relationships between adults and children/young people, and between peers
- 6.4 Understand when more complex situations might need specific interventions from other professionals, such as counselling or emotional support
- 6.5 Understand issues of stereotyping and equal opportunities as they apply to children and young people with VI

Health and well-being

- 6.6 Understand that some learners with VI may take longer to mature linguistically, socially and emotionally than their peers
- 6.7 Understand the impact of long-standing or progressive sight loss on the emotions, learning, behaviour and quality of life of learners with VI and on their families
- 6.8 Know how to help learners with VI to develop effective social and emotional skills
- 6.9 Know how to support learners with VI to understand their sight loss, encourage them to manage equipment independently where appropriate and develop a positive self-image as a young person with VI
- 6.10 Know how to promote knowledge and skills related to personal, social and health education, and sex and relationship education
- 6.11 Know how to exploit opportunities for learners with VI to make friends and enjoy leisure pursuits
- 6.12 Understand the importance of providing opportunities for children and young people with VI to meet and share experiences with each other

Skills

Promoting positive behaviour

- 6.13 Take account of the effects of vision impairment on the learning and behaviour of children and young people with VI
- 6.14 Encourage learners with VI to monitor and control their own behaviour
- 6.15 Encourage learners with VI to persevere with their learning when difficulties arise
- 6.16 Use effective strategies to promote positive behaviour, manage difficult situations and resolve conflict and, where necessary, use the range of management techniques outlined in the school/setting's policy on restraint

Health and well-being

- 6.17 Use effective strategies to raise awareness of vision impairment among sighted peers and to combat bullying
- 6.18 Provide opportunities for learners with VI to develop positive self-esteem, emotional well-being and self advocacy skills
- 6.19 Encourage learners with VI to adopt and maintain a healthy lifestyle

7. Supporting transition/transfer

Knowledge and understanding

- 7.1 Understand the principles and practices associated with successful transition
- 7.2 Have a good understanding of opportunities for school leavers with VI

Skills

- 7.3 Contribute to transition planning to ensure a smooth transfer from one class, phase and school/setting to another for learners with VI
- 7.4 Liaise with appropriate information, advice and guidance services to help learners with VI to make informed choices at the time of transition
- 7.5 Assist older learners to develop the knowledge and skills they will need in adult life, further or higher education, post-school training opportunities and employment

8. Partnership working

Working with children and young people with VI and their families

- 8.1 Recognise the rights and expectations of children and young people with VI and the importance of providing opportunities for them to make informed choices and express their views about issues that affect them as individuals and collectively
- 8.2 Recognise the rights and expectations of the parents/carers of children and young people with VI and know how to involve them in raising their children's achievement and improving their well-being, including through home-based learning
- 8.3 Understand the linguistic and cultural implications of working with learners and families for whom English is an additional language
- 8.4 Understand the impact on families of having one or more children with VI and know how to support them
- 8.5 Know how parents/carers and professionals can work together to promote the education, health and care of children and young people with VI
- 8.6 Understand how voluntary and advocacy agencies can help children and young people with VI and their parents/carers to make a full contribution to decisions about education and care

Teamwork and collaboration

- 8.7 Understand the roles and responsibilities of the range of specialist services and agencies that work with learners with VI and their families and the contribution

they make to the education, health and care of children and young people with VI

Skills

Working with children and young people with VI and their families

- 8.8 Take account of the views and preferences of children and young people with VI when planning, setting targets or making decisions that affect them
- 8.9 Liaise effectively and work in partnership with the parents/carers of learners with VI, providing information, advice and support as appropriate, based on the principles of informed choice

Teamworking and collaboration

- 8.10 Direct and oversee the work of support staff ensuring that they understand the targets of learners with VI and are clear about their role in helping them to achieve these
- 8.11 Ensure that staff, families and other professionals work together effectively to achieve best practice and maximise achievement for learners with VI
- 8.12 Work collaboratively with colleagues, other specialists and parents/carers to assess and support learners with VI, and to maximise their opportunities and achievement, through joint planning, implementation, evaluation and reporting
- 8.13 Respond appropriately to the emotional responses that may arise from working with children and young people with VI

Advising others

Skills

- 8.14 Use effective strategies to raise awareness of vision impairments among teachers and other adults working with learners with VI
- 8.15 Model best practice for others working with learners with VI, as a mechanism for advising others
- 8.16 Make well-founded appraisals of situations upon which they are asked to advise, applying high level skills of observation, analysis and evaluation
- 8.17 Observe and analyse the practice of colleagues working with learners with VI, recognise strengths and areas for improvement, and provide sensitive and constructive feedback
- 8.18 Provide professional direction to colleagues, support staff and parents/carers to improve their practice in working with learners with VI through, for example, advice, training or coaching
- 8.19 Advise on assessing baseline performance and the use of assessment, identifying strengths as well as needs, so that any progress resulting from special provision

can be determined

- 8.20 Advise on the use and effectiveness of specialised techniques and materials
- 8.21 Support the specialist contributions of other colleagues, teaching assistants, the wider school workforce, therapists and other professionals so that they have the maximum impact on learners with VI and their families
- 8.22 Raise awareness of the importance of good eye health and regular eye examinations
- 8.23 Advise on a range of initiatives linked to access and disability discrimination, and contribute to access planning for learners with VI
- 8.24 Be part of, or work closely with, leadership teams, taking a lead in developing, implementing and evaluating policies and practices that contribute to the achievement and well-being of learners with VI



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