

**Other opportunities**

If teaching isn't for you, you could consider working as a care assistant or nurse, teaching day-to-day life skills to people with physical or learning disabilities, for instance. The work of some therapists is similar to that of teachers. There are also posts for people without teaching qualifications to work as teaching assistants or support workers.

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**For further information**

**Careers Service**

Tel: (01481) 733044  
Email: [careers@education.gov.gg](mailto:careers@education.gov.gg)  
Web: [www.careers.gg](http://www.careers.gg)

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**Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA)**

Teaching information line: 0845 6000 991  
(or 0845 6000 922 for Welsh speakers).  
View careers and training information at:  
[www.tda.gov.uk](http://www.tda.gov.uk)

**Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship**

Tel: 01342 822115.  
[www.steinerwaldorf.org.uk](http://www.steinerwaldorf.org.uk)

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The following resources may be available in careers libraries:

Working in Schools & Colleges  
published by Babcock Lifeskills, £8.50.

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**THE  
FUTURE  
IN YOUR  
HANDS**

**Teaching:  
Special Needs**

# Teaching: Special Needs

Special educational needs teachers work with children, young people and adults with physical disabilities, hearing or visual impairment, learning disabilities, emotional problems, challenging behaviour etc. Teachers will usually have a few years' teaching experience before they move into this area.

As well as teaching the National Curriculum or courses leading to recognised qualifications as far as possible, special educational needs (SEN) teachers help people to develop self-confidence, independence and skills. There is currently a national shortage of SEN teachers.

## What it takes

SEN teachers require all the personal qualities required by any successful teacher, but they particularly need:

- patience and perseverance
- an ability to build trusting relationships
- a positive attitude, resourcefulness and imagination
- understanding, but also firmness and a constructive approach
- a sense of humour!

**N.B.** If you want to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, you have to undergo background checks.

## Teaching children

Children with SEN are, wherever possible, integrated into mainstream schools. Some schools have special units, e.g. for those children who need a special curriculum and learning environment. For some children, more appropriate education and care is offered by special schools. Most special schools are run by local authorities; others are run by voluntary organisations such as the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB). Some schools in the UK are residential.

Occasionally, teachers employed by local authorities are 'peripatetic'. That means they travel from one school to another to give specialist help – for example, to one or two deaf children in each mainstream school in their area. Guernsey operates a number of such peripatetic support services. There are also opportunities to teach in other settings, such as secure training centres for young offenders, pupil referral units and hospital schools.

To teach in any state school, you need Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) – for information about routes to qualifying as a teacher, contact the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) and see leaflet **Teaching: An introduction to the work and training**. All initial teacher training courses include some SEN work.

Special education is not generally a career for newly qualified teachers, but a specialism moved into after a few years. Training for SEN teaching is available mainly through part-time, in-service courses, funded by the school or local authority.

Training can be undertaken before moving into the work, or once you have started SEN teaching. Some universities offer relevant postgraduate-level courses. Courses specialising in teaching certain special needs, such as dyslexia, are available. To teach pupils with hearing, visual or multi-sensory impairment, you must take an approved 'mandatory qualification'. Various courses are available – a list of course providers can be found on the TDA website given at the end of this leaflet. You must also gain basic sign language skills or prove you can read Braille to teach hearing or visually impaired pupils respectively.

Some of the voluntary organisations running special schools and colleges offer their own training schemes, which may follow a particular approach. Contact specific organisations for more information. Steiner Waldorf special schools, for example, cater for students with a range of disabilities.

## Teaching young people and adults

Most colleges of further education (FE) – both mainstream and special – and other centres, offer general education and vocational training for people with SEN. Colleges need both academic subject teachers and those who can provide training in specific vocational skills (e.g. computing, catering or crafts).

To teach in FE in both England and Wales, you need to hold, or be working towards, a qualification endorsed by Standards Verification UK. In England, FE teachers need to gain Associate or Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (A/QTLS) status. Skills for life teachers also need a specialist literacy and numeracy teaching qualification.

For further information about teaching at the College of Further Education in Guernsey please contact the College direct.

## SEN Coordinators

All mainstream schools have SEN coordinators (often referred to as SENCOs) who are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN policy. They advise fellow teachers and work with parents, the educational psychology service and other support bodies. They also coordinate the provision for individual pupils and record their progress.

To work as a SENCO you must be a qualified teacher. New regulations have recently been introduced in England that require all new SENCOs to gain the National Award for SEN Coordination. The Award is at masters level and takes approximately one year to achieve part-time. A list of providers offering the Award can be found on the TDA website (search for 'SENCO training providers').

## Pay and prospects

For current pay rates for teachers in England and Wales please visit the Training and Development Agency's website [www.tda.gov.uk](http://www.tda.gov.uk)

Pay for teachers in Guernsey is generally negotiated on an annual basis. Teachers in Guernsey can generally earn more than their colleagues in England and Wales. Current salaries for teachers in Guernsey are available from the Education Department.

Promotion in mainstream schools is from SEN teacher to SENCO. After this, it's possible to become head of a special needs department in a larger school or college. Experienced staff may move into advisory work, inspection etc.